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Sarkozy cosies up to Harper; On stroll through Paris, French president reassures PM on Afghanistan, Kyoto

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On their first political date, a pair of budding allies moved quickly to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

The newly elected president of France took Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a stroll through the streets of Paris to a fancy restaurant where they dined following their first official encounter yesterday.

After meeting a fellow conservative who, like himself, seeks to leave his mark on a traditionally liberal country, Harper called French President Nicolas Sarkozy a great friend of Canada.

The new French government's first act of friendship was to reassure Harper that he has nothing to fear from Sarkozy's election promises on Afghanistan and climate change.

The youthful-looking president pledged during the campaign that he would pull French troops out of the war-torn country, and slap an import tax on goods from countries that failed to respect the Kyoto accord.

Both policies could cause trouble for Canada. But Harper left Paris expressing assuagement.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," Harper said about the import tax.

"What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve . . . is enforceable targets under an international protocol."

On Monday, Harper had told an audience in Germany that it's impossible for Canada to meet its goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

As for Afghanistan, Harper said he has no fear that France would suddenly pull out the 1,000 French troops stationed there as part of the international coalition.

"Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent," Harper said. "At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there."

Harper added, "He indicated to me no particular timetable to leave. So I think we're on the same page on both those matters."

Sarkozy cosies up to Harper; On stroll through Paris, French president reassures PM on Afghanistan, Kyoto

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon confirmed later at a news conference that there are no immediate plans for a pullout, and said Canada would not be the principal target of any eventual import tax.

Visiting Paris between meetings in Germany with leaders of the European Union and the Group of Eight, Harper spent the entire day in Paris and also met with Fillon.

But it was the encounter with the president that will go down as one of the more memorable bilateral experiences of Harper's 16-month-old prime ministership.

Sarkozy dispensed with diplomatic formalities and gave Harper a good-natured pat on the back when he arrived at the Elysee presidential palace.

By the end of the encounter he was referring to Harper by the friendly French pronoun, "tu," instead of the more formal, "vous."

After meeting briefly, they took a slow walk in the neighbourhood by the Champs-Elysees to eat in a three-century-old hotel dining room with gilded portraits and chandeliers.

Sarkozy energetically whisked the prime minister from one crowd of onlookers to the next. He touched Harper's hand at one point, tapping it to alert him to people cheering from their apartment balconies.

"Come! Hey, come on!" Sarkozy told the prime minister, whisking him toward a group of people standing by an open-air bistro. "We need to say hello. . . . Hello everyone!"

Someone in the president's entourage asked whether Harper minded mingling with the crowd. A voice that sounded like the prime minister's replied: "No."

The 52-year-old Sarkozy then ushered Harper past the restaurant and introduced him to curious pedestrians: "This is the prime minister of Canada."

The president made a beeline past a security barrier and began offering enthusiastic handshakes to members of the Canadian delegation. Harper cut in to identify them.

"These are Canadian journalists," the prime minister said.

Then he added with a smile: "I won't shake hands with you guys. That would be too much."

The president promised to take up Harper's offer of a second rendezvous in Canada.

Fillon later backed up Harper's assessment of the French positions on Afghanistan and climate change.

"There is no pullout plan whatsoever," Fillon said of Afghanistan. "France will be faithful to its promises and faithful to its allies."

Fillon offered no guarantee that Canada would be left untouched by any climate-related import tax.

But he hinted strongly that France's planned measure would target other countries whose lax environmental laws allow their companies to export goods to Europe at cheaper prices.

"We do not think Canada should be the most concerned by this question," he said.

"It's not primarily aimed at Canada."

Sarkozy cosies up to Harper; On stroll through Paris, French president reassures PM on Afghanistan, Kyoto

Taliban fighters killed aboard boat

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WORD COUNT: 74

Afghan forces sank a boat carrying suspected Taliban fighters fleeing an attack, and more than 20 drowned. A separate gun battle and air strikes killed an estimated two dozen militants in southern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

The Taliban fighters attacked Afghan and U.S.-led coalition troops with rockets and gunfire Monday in the Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province, sparking a four-hour battle, a coalition statement said.

Wooden ribbons one man's tribute to Canadian troops

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SECTION: Opinion
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BYLINE: Michael Staples The military
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 368

Canada's struggles in Afghanistan have touched the lives of many people in this country, both civilian and military.

The scenes of fallen Canadian soldiers returning to our soil, their flag– draped coffins lifted from planes is a sight we will never get used to. It's moving, compelling and disturbing.

Whether we agree with the mission or not, there can be no denying that citizens from coast to coast support the troops and what they are trying so hard to accomplish in the war–torn country. That is a given.

No – where is this more true than in the community of Keswick Ridgewood craftsman Phil Fanjoy lives and operates a small shop called Hearts and Crafts.

Moved by the events of Afghanistan in the last couple of months – events which have seen local soldiers killed by roadside bombs and a helicopter shot down – Fanjoy took it upon himself to create his own tribute to the troops.

He cut wooden ribbons to show support to the soldiers serving on the NATO– led International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan.

The ribbons are similar to the support our troops seen throughout Fredericton and across New Brunswick and Canada.

Fanjoy's wooden ribbon features a cutout image of a soldier and two maple leaves and is inscribed with the words Canada and Lest We Forget.

It represents extremely delicate, dainty work.

"The ribbon is our own design," Fanjoy said.

"It's a different type of art work. I have always had the greatest respect for the Armed Forces." Creating such designs is a skill Fanjoy has been honing for the last 17 years.

He and his brother Eric, who died a couple of years ago, opened their shop in 1990.

For the first 10 years, it was a full–time occupation for the siblings.

It now accounts for about 75 per cent of his work, Fanjoy said.

Wooden ribbons one man's tribute to Canadian troops

Fanjoy sells his creations at a booth at Boyce Farmers Market every Saturday.

His work includes wildlife images, horses, classic cars and vintage airplanes.

He said his military ribbons have been well received by the hundreds of people who make their way through the market each week.

He sold one of his wooden ribbons to a patron who lost a family member in Afghanistan in April.

And at least one woman whose husband is serving in Afghanistan has bought one of the ribbons.

Knowing that some of his creations may soon find their way to Afghanistan leaves the friendly vendor with a sense that he has used his talents to create something special.

"It makes me feel good to know my work may actually be over with the troops," he said. "Most of these boys are country boys, too." As long as our soldiers are in the country, Fanjoy says he will be doing what he can, in his own way, to let them know that he cares.

Michael Staples covers the military for the Daily Gleaner. He can be reached at staples.michael@dailygleaner.com.

Harper tries to find common ground with Sarkozy

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But it was the encounter with the president that will go down as one of the more memorable bilateral experiences of Harper's 16-month-old prime ministership.

Time to care about Khadr

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.06.06

SECTION: Editorial page

PAGE: 6

COLUMN: Our View

WORD COUNT: 499

Omar Khadr isn't from Kingston. Nor is he particularly likeable. In fact, most people regard him and his relatives as notorious: Canada's first family of Al–Qaida.

Still, Kingstonians and other Canadians should be vitally interested in what just happened to the 20–year–old man, who has been held in detention at Guantanamo Bay for the past five years. And they should be even more interested in what happens next.

Monday, a military judge in the United States tossed out murder charges against Khadr that stemmed from his activities fighting American forces in Afghanistan. Khadr was captured as a 15–year–old and accused of throwing a grenade that killed one American soldier and blinded a second.

He's been held at Guantanamo since, a sort of maturing child soldier suspended in a bizarre legal limbo.

U.S. attempts to prosecute many of those held at Guantanamo outside of the normal courts or courts martial have hit legal minefield after legal minefield. The commission that threw out charges against Khadr this week did so because of sheer technical sloppiness in how the prosecutors classified him. Despite that, there are no swift prospects for his freedom. The Americans may well decide to hold him for another five years – or longer.

Canadians haven't raised much of a protest about the young man's treatment. Khadr's family background, after all, wouldn't spur anyone to welcome him warmly into their livingroom. Father Ahmed Khadr, now deceased, was high up the Al–Qaida food chain. One of Omar's brothers was accused of supplying weapons to terrorists while another apparently attended Al–Qaida–type camps. A third also fought the Americans in Afghanistan and was paralysed in combat. Omar's mother once recounted to CBC her respect for suicide bombers.

Our collective opprobrium for the family has let the Canadian government get away with something it no longer should: virtually ignoring Khadr's incarceration.

Under international law, a country need not rush to the aid of one of its citizens if the citizen is in trouble abroad. True, there is certainly a public expectation of help, but in this case, the federal government has dragged its heels. Emotionally, Canadians probably understand the federal reluctance: it's distasteful to be assisting someone whose family has been generally troublesome.

Now, however, things have changed. Khadr's rights under international law have clearly been violated; the rejection of the murder case against him because of the chaotic structure of the ever–changing prosecution system illustrates this. In dismissing the case against Khadr, the presiding judge said, "A person could be facing trial for months without knowing whether the court had legitimate jurisdiction."

This is the right moment for Canada to step in and demand better on behalf of one of its citizens. Other countries have done so and the U.S. has listened. Continued silence from our own prime minister would suggest this country truly doesn't care about due process and basic human rights.

Are we a country that defends rights only when we admire the person involved? We're not like that, even if we dislike Khadr.

Letters? Send them to whiged@thewhig.com

Squadron supporting Afghan mission returning

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.06.06

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: B2

WORD COUNT: 62

GREENWOOD (CP) – A Canadian military team working in southwest Asia to support the campaign against terrorism is returning home to Nova Scotia later this month.

Approximately 100 members of the mission support squadron will arrive at 14 Wing Greenwood on June 11 and June 15.

The squadron, comprising engineers, technicians, clerks, cooks and others, was part of Task Force Afghanistan.

Their deployment lasted six months.

[GREENWOOD (CP)– A Canadian military team working in southwest Asia to support the campaign against terrorism is returning home to Nova Scotia later this...]

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DATE: 2007.06.06

SECTION: NovaScotia

PAGE: B2

WORD COUNT: 514

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Their deployment lasted six months.

STELLARTON – The Nova Scotia Museum of Industry in Stellarton will open a mixed–media exhibit by a Guatemalan artist later this month. Marlon Garcia Arriaga's Panzos: 25 Years Later is a collection of paintings, portraits, and photography focusing on the 1978 killing of 53 Guatemalans who tried to stop their government's land grab for the benefit of the Canadian mining company INCO.

The show opens June 19 at 7 p.m. with the artist, and information on the social and environmental aspects of Canadian mining.

The opening is followed by a June 27 screening of the film Sipakapa is Not for Sale, about the Mayan resistance to Canadian gold mine development in Guatemala. The speaker for this event is Kathryn Anderson, co–ordinator of the Maritimes–Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for both events. The show runs until July 6. It turns out there was no family emergency after all.

On May 18, a 52–year–old Halifax man driving a Dodge Caravan collided with a police motorcycle at the intersection of South Street and South Park Street in Halifax. The man said he was on his way to deal with a family emergency so police let him go on the promise he would return. He didn't, and police had failed to take down any of his information.

Last Thursday, the man alleged to have been involved in the collision and his Caravan were found at a Halifax apartment building. The man admitted he made up the emergency story, Halifax Regional Police said.

He was ticketed for failing to yield the right of way and for driving while suspended, without insurance and with expired registration.

[GREENWOOD (CP)– A Canadian military team working in southwest Asia to support the campaign against terrorism is returning home to Nova Scotia later this month.]

A sting operation at Crystal Crescent Beach outside Halifax has netted two suspects in a rash of thefts from cars over the past few weeks.

Following continued complaints of thefts at the beach parking lot during the past month, police set up an unmarked police vehicle in the lot Friday afternoon.

A car pulled up and a man got out and began acting suspiciously around parked cars before entering the unmarked police vehicle. He and the driver of the car were arrested by officers observing the lot from a short distance away.

Both men, aged 20 and 29, were charged with attempted theft.

A new apartment building could be sprouting up on South Street in Halifax.

The Armour Group Ltd., owner of the property at the corner of Wellington Street, has had excavators and dump trucks at the site for the past few weeks. The city's planning and development office says Armour wants to put a 70-unit building on the land.

The project is still under review and a development permit has not yet been issued.

Four years ago, Armour proposed a 100-unit housing development at the site, which used to be home to the Attic Owl and Hen House furniture.

A 28-year-old man has been charged with a break-in at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Dartmouth in May.

Electronics, food and cash were stolen from the Alfred Street church at some point during the Victoria Day weekend.

Charges were laid against the man after police interviewed him Saturday at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Dartmouth, where he is being held in relation to other alleged crimes.

Local media should find balance, recognize good news

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

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SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: A7

BYLINE: A.m. Payn

WORD COUNT: 349

On Thursday, May 24, a local Halifax hero was profiled prominently in the Globe and Mail. Royal Air Force pilot Flight Lieutenant Chris Hasler was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, bestowed on him by the Queen for his "great courage" and "gallantry" in Afghanistan.

The Globe shows the proud, handsome young Nova Scotian holding up his well–deserved award, in a highly visible area on page 6 of the national paper.

Chris, whose parents were longtime residents of Halifax, demonstrated tremendous bravery and commitment in July 2006 by landing his aircraft while under small–arms fire and a rocket–propelled grenade attack, allowing troops to disembark and reinforce other ground troops already under significant threat from Taliban forces.

A week earlier, he displayed "great courage and composure in a most demanding and high risk environment," to quote the Globe, during another encounter with Taliban forces.

A true hero. We should all be so proud of Chris Hasler and others like him. And we should be celebrating their achievements.

Where was The Chronicle Herald in its reporting of this proud accomplishment of one of our native sons? Chris's story appeared in a short CP article on page 9 of the newspaper, barely detectable and easily overlooked.

Chris's story and picture should have been on the front page of our newspaper. We should be celebrating such action and heroism of our youth.

What was on our front page that day, where Chris should have been? Beer price hikes and more shock and scandal.

The media play an important role in how we see ourselves – as Nova Scotians and as Canadians, and as peacekeepers in what too often feels more like a war.

In a community where we have students in a high school class tell a visiting business leader that the vast majority of them plan to leave our province, when we desperately need to have them stay – we need our media's support to create a welcoming and supportive environment for our young, be they soldiers, tradespeople or professionals.

I am not asking that The Chronicle Herald report only the good things, but please, let's have some balance; and when there are positive events, at least make some attempt to recognize and praise that which is good about our beautiful city and province, especially its people.

A.M. Payn lives in Bedford.

Khadr's case

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.06.06

SECTION: Editorial

PAGE: A6

WORD COUNT: 298

CANADIAN Omar Ahmed Khadr isn't likely to be freed from American custody at Guantanamo Bay anytime soon, despite Monday's headline news that a U.S. military tribunal dismissed all charges against the youth.

There's less, and more, than first apparent in that decision.

First, the military commission dismissed the charges "without prejudice," meaning that Mr. Khadr can be retried on the same charges: murder in violation of the laws of war, attempted murder in violation of the laws of war, conspiracy, providing material support for terrorism and spying.

Mr. Khadr was captured following a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002. Then 15, he stands accused of killing a U.S. army medic with a hand grenade.

Second, the charges were dismissed on jurisdictional grounds. The commission ruled that it had been set up to try "unlawful enemy combatants" – those fighting U.S. forces without regular military uniforms – but that Mr. Khadr and hundreds of others being held at Guantanamo have thus far only formally been designated "enemy combatants," by another U.S. tribunal at the base.

What may seem merely a problem of semantics, however, is symptomatic of the ongoing confusion over the U.S. administration's efforts to dispense military justice to captured suspected terrorists.

The White House's first system was thrown out by the U.S. Supreme Court, leading to the Military Commissions Act passed by Congress last fall. The Bush administration says the new commissions can find enemy combatants "unlawful." But two separate commission hearings, including Mr. Khadr's, declared on Monday they did not have that authority. Compounding the problem, the new military appeals court – where prosecutors say they will go next with Mr. Khadr's case – has yet to be set up.

Innocent or guilty, Mr. Khadr should not be held indefinitely without a chance to make his case before a court of law.

French president says he'll play nice with PM; Afghanistan, climate change on plate during dinner date

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.06.06

SECTION: World

PAGE: A4

BYLINE: Alex Panetta The Canadian Press

ILLUSTRATION: Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife Laureen walk past the French Honour Guard as they arrive in Paris on Tuesday. (Fred Chartrand / CP)

WORD COUNT: 513

PARIS – On their first political date, a pair of budding allies moved quickly to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

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"Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent," Harper said. "At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there."

"He indicated to me no particular timetable to leave. So I think we're on the same page on both those matters."

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon confirmed later at a news conference that there are no immediate plans for a pullout, and said Canada would not be the principal target of any eventual import tax. Visiting Paris

between meetings in Germany with leaders of the European Union and the Group of Eight, Harper spent the entire day in Paris and also met with Fillon.

But it was the encounter with the president that will go down as one of the more memorable bilateral experiences of Harper's 16-month-old prime ministership.

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French president promises to play nice with Harper; PM calls Nicolas Sarkozy a great friend of Canada

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.06.06

SECTION: News

PAGE: B7

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Alex Panetta

DATELINE: PARIS

WORD COUNT: 489

On their first political date, a pair of budding allies moved quickly to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

The newly elected president of France took Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a stroll through the streets of Paris to a fancy restaurant where they dined following their first official encounter Tuesday.

After meeting a fellow conservative who, like himself, seeks to leave his mark on a traditionally liberal country, Harper called French President Nicolas Sarkozy a great friend of Canada.

The new French government's first act of friendship was to reassure Harper that he has nothing to fear from Sarkozy's election promises on Afghanistan and climate change.

The youthful-looking president pledged during the campaign that he would pull French troops out of the war-torn country, and slap an import tax on goods from countries that failed to respect the Kyoto accord.

Both policies could cause trouble for Canada. But Harper left Paris expressing assuagement.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," Harper said about the import tax.

"What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve ... is enforceable targets under an international protocol." On Monday, Harper had told an audience in Germany that it's impossible for Canada to meet its goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

As for Afghanistan, Harper said he has no fear that France would suddenly pull out the 1,000 French troops stationed there as part of the international coalition.

"Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent," Harper said. "At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there."

"He indicated to me no particular timetable to leave. So I think we're on the same page on both those matters."

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon confirmed later at a news conference that there are no immediate plans for a pullout, and said Canada would not be the principal target of any eventual import tax. Visiting Paris between meetings in Germany with leaders of the European Union and the Group of Eight, Harper spent the entire day in Paris and also met with Fillon.

But it was the encounter with the president that will go down as one of the more memorable bilateral experiences of Harper's 16-month-old prime ministership.

Sarkozy dispensed with diplomatic formalities and gave Harper a good-natured pat on the back when he arrived at the Elysee presidential palace.

By the end of the encounter he was referring to Harper by the friendly French pronoun, "tu," instead of the more formal, "vous."

After meeting briefly, they took a slow walk in the neighbourhood by the Champs-Elysees to eat in a three-century-old hotel dining room with gilded portraits and chandeliers.

Sarkozy energetically whisked the prime minister from one crowd of onlookers to the next. He touched Harper's hand at one point, tapping it to alert him to people cheering from their apartment balconies.

"Come! Hey, come on!" Sarkozy told the prime minister, whisking him toward a group of people standing by an open-air bistro. "We need to say hello ... Hello everyone!"

Someone in the president's entourage asked whether Harper minded mingling with the crowd. A voice that sounded like the prime minister's replied: "No."

The 52-year-old Sarkozy then ushered Harper past the restaurant and introduced him to curious pedestrians: "This is the prime minister of Canada."

French president promises to play nice with Harper

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)
DATE: 2007.06.06
SECTION: National/World
PAGE: A7
SOURCE: CP
BYLINE: Alex Panetta
DATELINE: Paris
ILLUSTRATION: French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister Stephen Harper walk down a Paris street after meeting at the Elysee Palace, as they make their way to a restaurant in Paris Tuesday. – Photo by The Canadian Press
WORD COUNT: 485

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A slow stroll

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French president promises to play nice with Harper on their first meeting

DATE: 2007.06.05
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE ENVIRONMENT INTERNATIONAL
POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 772

PARIS (CP) _ On their first political date, a pair of budding allies moved quickly to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

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The 52-year-old Sarkozy then ushered Harper past the restaurant and introduced him to curious pedestrians: "This is the prime minister of Canada."

The president made a beeline past a security barrier and began offering enthusiastic handshakes to members of the Canadian delegation. Harper cut in to identify them.

"These are Canadian journalists," the prime minister said.

Then he added with a smile: "I won't shake hands with you guys. That would be too much."

The president promised to take up Harper's offer of a second rendezvous in Canada.

Fillon later backed up Harper's assessment of the French positions on Afghanistan and climate change.

"There is no pullout plan whatsoever," Fillon said of Afghanistan. "France will be faithful to its promises and faithful to its allies."

Fillon offered no guarantee that Canada would be left untouched by any climate-related import tax.

But he hinted strongly that France's planned measure would target other countries whose lax environmental laws allow their companies to export goods to Europe at cheaper prices.

"We do not think Canada should be the most concerned by this question," he said.

"It's not primarily aimed at Canada."

French officials have offered reassurance that any import duties would first need to be proposed for adoption by the European Union, and that Sarkozy had other more pressing priorities.

On the environment, Fillon called it unfair that European countries operate under green rules while others don't, giving some countries an unfair trade advantage. The previous French government had hinted that countries like China, India and Brazil could be the targets of such a tax.

“We need to respect competitiveness rules that allow European countries and other countries to compete with the same handicaps and advantages,” Fillon said.

Harper weighed in cautiously on another matter expected to surface at the G8 summit later this week: the increasingly antagonistic talk from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin has warned that Moscow could once again aim its missiles at Europe _ just like during the Cold War _ if Washington presses ahead with its plans for an anti-missile defence system.

Putin says the U.S. plans are aimed at Russia rather than rogue states, such as Iran. But Harper called that concern ill-founded.

“We are convinced that NATO's intentions are rather clear,” Harper said.

“There is no reason to interpret these actions as a threat against Russia. I am sure we will discuss this issue _ and many others _ at the G8 summit.”

U.S. soldier wounded in attack blamed on Khadr says he wants justice

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 156

TORONTO (CP) _ A former U-S soldier who was wounded in an attack in Afghanistan that was alleged to have involved Omar Khadr says he wants to see justice served.

Layne Morris a Special Forces sergeant in 2002 told the Toronto Star he sees his pursuit of justice as a tribute to fellow sergeant Christopher Speer, who was killed in the battle.

Following Monday's surprise dismissal of charges against Khadr, he says he was upset but calmed down when he realized it was a case of justice delayed on a technicality.

He notes Khadr is still incarcerated.

Morris, who is retired from the army, filed a civil suit in 2004 with Speer's widow.

They accused Khadr's father, Ahmed Said Khadr, of training his son to be a terrorist.

A Salt Lake City judge awarded the couple 102 million dollars U-S in damages last year.

However, the U-S Justice Department has frozen the Khadr family's assets and Morris has been unable to collect.

"I feel a responsibility to the U.S. military institution and a fellow soldier's family, who does need to feel there is justice out there and needs to see it done," Morris said Monday.

Long Island county turns down first would-be poet laureate over war views

DATE: 2007.06.05
KEYWORDS: ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS INTERNATIONAL
POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 304

GARDEN CITY, N.Y. (AP) _ A poet's writings on the war in Iraq cost him a chance to become the first poet laureate of Nassau County _ one of the wealthiest counties in the nation _ after lawmakers denounced his work as an affront to Americans in the military.

A Nassau County legislative committee voted 6-1 Monday against giving the unpaid post to Maxwell Corydon Wheat Jr., who had been nominated by a six-member advisory group. Wheat, 80, has written poetry for decades and is known for writing about Long Island's natural attributes.

The 2004 U.S. Census listed Nassau as the richest county in New York State _ and sixth richest in the nation _ with multimillion-dollar homes along its northern shore of Long Island Sound, known as the Gold Coast.

It was Wheat's 2004 book, "Iraq and Other Killing Fields: Poetry for Peace," that became a point of contention for the county Legislature's Government Services Committee.

The book includes a poem called "Torture," with the subtitles "Saddam Hussein Regime" and "George W. Bush Administration." A poem Wheat read at the committee meeting describes a "gunner aboard tank bearing barrel legend 'Bush & Co'" firing cannon shells that kill two men "in an explosion of blood and steel."

To the leader of the Legislature's Republican minority, Peter J. Schmitt, Wheat's poems "condemn the troops fighting for America in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that's absolutely tragic."

Wheat urged the legislators not to "let concerns for the meaning of the poems stop you from enjoying the poems." The only committee member who voted in Wheat's favour, Democrat Wayne Wink, said he didn't entirely agree with the poet, but he had been duly nominated.

It was unclear after the vote whether the county would keep looking for a poet laureate. The two-year appointment involves giving two readings a year and otherwise promoting poetry in Nassau County.

Estimated 24 Taliban fighters killed in southern Afghan battle

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 108

KABUL (AP) _ A gunbattle and air strikes killed an estimated two dozen Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan, the U.S.-led coalition said Tuesday.

The Taliban fighters attacked Afghan and coalition troops with rockets and gunfire Monday in the Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province, sparking a four-hour battle. Fighter aircraft bombed three enemy positions, a coalition statement said.

It said ``an estimated two dozen enemy fighters" were killed during the battle but gave no further details on the casualty toll.

Also Monday, a roadside bomb injured two soldiers in the eastern province Khost, said provincial police chief Wazir Pacha.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force said it knew ISAF troops were involved in that incident but it had no further details.

U.S. warplanes dropping bombs on Iraq at twice last year's rate: report

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 655

The airpower escalation parallels a nearly four-month-old security crackdown that is bringing 30,000 additional U.S. troops into Baghdad and its surroundings, an urban campaign aimed at restoring order to an area riven with sectarian violence.

It also reflects increased availability of planes from U.S. aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf. And it appears to be accompanied by a rise in Iraqi civilian casualties.

In the first 4

bombs and missiles in support of ground forces in Iraq, already surpassing the 229 expended in all of 2006, according to U.S. Air Force figures obtained by The Associated Press.

“Air operations over Iraq have ratcheted up significantly, in the number of sorties, the number of hours (in the air),” said Col. Joe Guastella, air force operations chief for the region. “It has a lot to do with increased pressure on the enemy by MNC-I” _ the Multinational Corps-Iraq _ “combined with more carriers.”

The air force report did not break down the specific locations in Iraq where bombings have been stepped up. But U.S.-led forces also are locked in new and dangerous fronts against insurgents outside Baghdad in such places as Diyala, a province northeast of the capital.

A second U.S. navy aircraft carrier on station since February in the Persian Gulf has added some 80 warplanes to the U.S. air arsenal in the region.

At the same time, the number of civilian Iraqi casualties from U.S. air strikes appears to have risen sharply, according to Iraq Body Count, a London-based, antiwar research group that maintains a database compiling news media reports on Iraqi war deaths.

The rate of such reported civilian deaths appeared to climb steadily through 2006, the group reports, averaging just a few a month in early 2006, hitting some 40 a month by year's end, and averaging more than 50 a month so far this year.

Those are maximum tolls based on news reports, and they count those killed by army helicopter fire as well as by warplanes, Iraq Body Count's John Sloboda said. The count is regarded as conservative, since it doesn't include deaths missed by the international media.

The U.S. military itself says it doesn't track civilian casualties.

“The reality of civilian deaths is a year-on-year increase,” said Sloboda, a psychology professor at Britain's Keele University. “This particular part of it _ air strikes _ have rocketed up more than any other.”

Air Force figures show that, after the thousands of bombs and missiles used in the 2003 “shock and awe” invasion, U.S. airpower settled down to a slow bombing pace: 285 munitions dropped in 2004, 404 in 2005

and 229 in 2006, totals that don't include warplanes' often-devastating 20mm and 30mm cannon or rocket fire, or Marine Corps aircraft.

The number of air force and navy "close air support" missions, which usually involve a flyover show of force or surveillance work, rather than bombing, also has grown by some 30 to 40 per cent this spring, said army Lt.-Col. Bryan Cox, a ground-forces liaison at the regional air headquarters.

Examples of attacks, as reported in the air force's daily summary:

_Last Friday, an air force F-16 fighter dropped a guided 226-kilogram bomb near the northern city of Tal Afar that destroyed a vehicle laden with explosives to be used as a bomb.

_The day before, an F-16 dropped a similar bomb on "an inaccessible building being used by insurgents" near Samarra, north of Baghdad, with "good effects."

_Last Wednesday, another F-16 dropped bombs on "an illegal bridge and an insurgent vehicle in Baghdad."

Police and other Iraqi sources sometimes report civilian casualties in such air strikes that are not reflected in the official U.S. accounts.

Air force Col. Gary Crowder, deputy director of the regional air operations centre, said such casualties "pale in comparison" with civilian casualties from ground combat.

"In Iraq, we minimize our deployment of air-delivered weapons in populated areas," he said.

Crowder, Guastella and Cox were interviewed outside Iraq at the regional U.S. air headquarters. Journalists are allowed to visit that low-profile base on condition they don't disclose its location, a politically sensitive matter to the host country.

Air attacks in Iraq are still relatively low compared with the numbers of weapons dropped in Afghanistan: 929 this year as of May 15.

On the Net:

Iraq Body Count: <http://www.iraqbodycount.net>

Canadian squadron supporting Afghan mission returning to Nova Scotia

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 62

GREENWOOD, N.S. (CP) _ A Canadian military team working in southwest Asia to support the campaign against terrorism is returning home to Nova Scotia later this month.

Approximately 100 members of the mission support squadron will arrive at 14 Wing Greenwood on June 11 and June 15.

The squadron, comprising engineers, technicians, clerks, cooks and others, was part of Task Force Afghanistan.

Their deployment lasted six months.

What is a burka?

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL RETAIL SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 269

Burkas typically consist of a round embroidered cap on the top and long fabric extending out on all sides. The fabric in the front has a webbed viewfinder grill with embroidery around it, and extends to the thighs. The sides and back are pleated, allowing a gentle billowing in the wind as well as freedom of movement.

In conservative Afghan families, a girl will start wearing a burka in her early teens, when she hits puberty or physically looks like a woman. Conservative Afghans believe a woman should not be seen by men outside her family, which is a serious matter of dignity and honour.

A woman puts on her burka before leaving home and wears it when walking around town, sitting in the car and even shopping. She sometimes pulls the front of the burka back over her head, to reveal her face so she can see and breathe more freely, but if she passes a man, she will quickly pull the burka down again to conceal her face.

Afghan elders and academics say the burka is believed to have come from northern Afghanistan or India, and spread across the country in the late 1800s.

In the 20th century, King Amanullah Khan and Prime Minister Mohammad Daud both tried unsuccessfully at separate times to get rid of the burka, but it has never gone away in the provinces and outside central Kabul.

When the Taliban came into power in 1996, they mandated that women could not leave home without a male relative or their burka. Women were allowed out unaccompanied and burka-free again after the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

Khadr trial is derailed

DATE: 2007.06.05

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 511

The court trial of Canadian Omar Khadr has ground to a halt at Guantanamo Bay, where he has been held for five years by the U.S. for war crimes, but his personal trials grind on. The former should be jump-started so as to mitigate the latter.

In a surprise decision on Monday, a U.S. military judge dismissed on a technicality all terrorism charges against Mr. Khadr, the youngest son of the Ontario Muslim family closely linked to Osama bin Laden's terrorist organization, al-Qaida. It was expected that the trial would begin in confusion about who would represent Mr. Khadr, who was 15 when he was arrested for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. soldier. Instead, the judge, Col. Peter Brownback, ruled that he could not hear the Khadr case because legislation passed by the U.S. Congress last year establishing military commissions states they can only try "unlawful enemy combatants." Mr. Khadr, meanwhile, has been listed since 2004 only as an "enemy combatant." The use of the word unlawful is to separate uniformed combatants, who have a right to fight, from non-uniformed combatants, who do not have a right to fight.

The prosecution insisted that it has evidence, including videotape of Mr. Khadr in civilian clothes helping to plant a roadside bomb, to prove that he in fact was acting as an unlawful combatant in Afghanistan, where he was captured in July 2002. But it was unclear exactly how it was going to do so. Judge Brownback ruled his decision will not prejudice future charges, and that the U.S. can continue to hold him indefinitely as an enemy combatant. But where is the prosecution to make its case? The law creating military commissions allows for appeals, but it is in the early days of being implemented and no such appeal body as yet exists.

In the confusion, it was argued that the commissions be scrapped, and perhaps they should be. It has been argued, by U.S. President George W. Bush, no less, that alternatives to "Gitmo" be pursued, such as trying suspected war criminals in the United States or in the country where their alleged war crimes occurred.

Five years after Omar Khadr was arrested and detained by U.S. authorities, it is wrong that they have not properly established his enemy status and in turn that failure has again delayed his trial. But just as wrong would be to find some way to bargain Mr. Khadr out of the trying circumstances in which he is being held. He is charged with unconscionable acts, including murder in violation of the law of war, attempted murder in violation of the law of war, conspiracy, providing material support for terrorism and spying. None of these charges should be lost or diminished as a result of a legal technicality.

DATE: 2007.06.05

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 560

^Canadian War Museum Announces Winners of History Prizes for Students@<

June 05, 2007

OTTAWA, ONTARIO—(CCNMatthews – June 5, 2007) – The Canadian War Museum (CWM) has announced the five winners of the 2007 Colonel Douglas H. Gunter History Awards for graduating secondary school students. The theme for this year's entries, "Canada's Changing Role in Afghanistan," coincides with the War Museum's special exhibition AFGHANISTAN: A Glimpse of War, on display until January 6, 2008.

High school students in their final year from across Canada were invited to explore how the Canadian mission in Afghanistan has changed in the past five years, and to consider how our soldiers' presence has affected Canadians as well as the Afghan people.

"The Canadian War Museum has a responsibility to help students better understand history and its relevance to their lives," says Joe Geurts, Director and CEO of the Canadian War Museum. "We chose the Canadian mission in Afghanistan as this year's topic because it is an example of history unfolding right now. Young people are witnessing the effects of the war both at home and abroad, either through the news or through the experiences of their own siblings, parents or other family members who have been deployed to Afghanistan."

A total of 65 students submitted a wide variety of original works, including essays, poems and visual art, which were judged for their creativity, scholarship, critical thinking, relevance and ability to communicate a clear message. The following winners will each receive \$1,000 and their works will be displayed in the War Museum and posted on the CWM Web site (www.warmuseum.ca):

Lindsey MacCallum of Fredericton, N.B. for "Leaving," an account of her own emotions, thoughts and reaction in response to her brother's departure to Afghanistan in early 2007.

Kelsey Stevens of Calgary, Alta. for "To Be The End," a poem written from the perspectives of two women: the mother of a female Canadian soldier, and the mother of an Afghani boy recruited by the Taliban.

Olivia Gilmer-Chekosky of Winnipeg, Man. for "Le role changeant du Canada en Afghanistan," a mixed media artwork that integrates newspaper clippings, text and images.

Lindsay Steele of Campbellford, Ont. for "Dear Mom: I Miss You," a fictional account of a Grade 8 student's reaction to her mother's deployment to Afghanistan, and a letter written from the mother's perspective.

Kelsey Epler of Edmonton, Alta. for "Crucial Changes," a pencil crayon drawing of many symbols and images relevant to Canada's role in Afghanistan.

The Colonel Douglas H. Gunter History Awards, established in 2006, are funded by the Friends of the Canadian War Museum, through a bequest from Colonel Gunter's family. Beginning in 1998, the Canadian War Museum funded its own history awards. In total, some \$38,000 in prizes has been distributed to 38 students across the country.

"This year's entries demonstrate an impressive understanding among young people of the realities of war and peacekeeping, which is the whole purpose of the Colonel Douglas H. Gunter History Awards," says Angus Brown, President of the Friends of the Canadian War Museum. "The Friends of the Canadian War Museum would like to congratulate the winners for their excellent work."

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NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY CCNMatthews

Taliban gone, but burka still here – with new fabrics, less fuss

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL RETAIL SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 1206

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) _ Without lifting her all-covering veil, an Afghan woman examines a few dozen blue burkas draped on the walls of a narrow Kabul shop. She fingers the various shades of blue pleated fabric _ steel grey-blue, lighter and brighter blues_ and pulls them off their hooks, one by one, to see if the cap fits and length is right.

She is young, maybe in her low-20s. Although she remains hidden beneath the burka she already has on, she is obviously meticulous about her looks _ as are many Afghan women under the veil. She wears pretty emerald green matching tunic and pants, and cute strappy sandals.

Touching the blue or white embroidered designs with fingers adorned with glossy red nail polish _ which was banned under the Taliban _ and gold rings, she haggles a price with the male shopkeeper.

"I'm happy wearing it. This is Afghan culture," says the shy young woman, her seductive kohl-ringed eyes glimpsed through the window of burka webbing over her face. After buying a new burka at the outdoor shop in the capital, she hurries off before giving her name.

Despite advances in women's rights since the fall of the Taliban regime more than five years ago _ including the right to venture out in public without a male relative _ many Afghan women are still wearing the shroud-like gowns that were mandatory under the hardline militia's rule. A bustling cottage industry supports the continuing demand for burkas. But the traditional art of dying and pleating the flowing garments is disappearing as cottons are replaced by imported synthetic fabrics that do not lose their colour or shape.

When the mandatory burka law went the way of the Taliban five years ago, many women in the capital swapped their full-length burkas for simpler, lighter scarves that cover their hair, neck and shoulders.

Some women wear larger chadors, which come down to the thighs but still reveal the face. These scarves come in cotton or wool, and various colours and designs. Schoolgirls wear small white scarves that cover their hair, while young women wear bright scarves adorned with glitter and rhinestones.

But the burka remains ubiquitous in conservative regions inhabited by Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, and across the border in northwestern Pakistan. In the southern city of Kandahar and outlying villages, few women venture onto the street without one _ or even walk outside their homes at all. Conservative Afghans believe a woman should not be seen by men outside her family, which is a serious matter of dignity and honour.

Many women complain how uncomfortable a burka is: it's difficult to breathe, and wearing the tight burka cap all day tangles their hair and puts uncomfortable pressure on the scalp. When they comb their hair, it falls out in clumps.

Some women who only started wearing the burka during the Taliban were so unaccustomed to their muffled sensory perceptions and vision, they would stumble and fall.

But those who wear the burka say it gives them freedom from harassment by men on the streets as well as their families. They say they feel naked without it. Some choose the burka as a form of protest against western culture and clothes.

Nasrin Marzid, a mother in her early 40s, put her thumb and forefinger up to her temples to show where the cap and its heavy, 1.5-metre-long cloak used to squeeze her head.

“My forehead hurt, so I just wear a chador now,” said Nasrin. “My husband can't say anything because it was causing me pain.”

The best burkas are made of cotton _ a fabric which breathes and is cool in summer, warm in the winter. The downside is that they must be dyed every so often because they fade, and re-pleated every time they're laundered or dyed. They've been largely eclipsed by the polyester Herati burka, which keeps its pleats and colour.

Shah Wali, who works at a tiny shop in Kabul, used to dye about 250 to 300 burkas per week before the Herati burka _ named after the western city where it is believed to have originated _ first came into vogue about 10 years ago.

Now because the new Herati burka does not fade, he does only about five per week, using a small cauldron heated by a wood-burning fire. His profession is rapidly fading out, and Wali said he would gladly trade his cauldron for a taxi to drive for a living instead.

Wali's daughter, Hanifa Rahimi, 18, has the tiring, tedious job of pleating. She earns 10 Afghanis, about 20 cents, for each burka, which has between 320 and 400 pleats and takes about half an hour to finish.

She wets the garment with a mixture of egg whites and starch, and then folds each pleat, working her way down the burka 15 centimetres at a time. She then sets it to dry in the sun, weighed down by several stones to keep the pleats intact.

Large-pleated burkas cost about 250 to 400 Afghanis, or about \$5 to \$8, each; those with more pleats cost 1,500 Afghanis, around US\$20. Burkas also come in different sizes and with embroidered designs around the webbing at the eyes and on the edges.

Most burkas are blue, though it's not clear why this has become the colour of choice. In the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, women opt for white. In Kabul shops, the burkas that come in grass green, cardinal red and mustard yellow are mostly sold as souvenirs to foreigners.

Women use older burkas for going to the market or running errands. For weddings and functions, they wear nicer, newer burkas, which they take off once they enter segregated areas for women.

Women usually cover their arms all the way to their wrists, and their legs to their ankles. Under the burka, which still reveals the front of the legs, older women dress more traditionally, with long skirts layered over old-fashioned white frilly, ankle-length underpants, and black, low-heeled shoes. Younger women wear colourful and trendy tunics with loose-fitting pants and often, platform sandals.

Sometimes women wear low-cut or sleeveless blouses for special occasions, but put on fake sleeves so they look like they are wearing long-sleeved shirts.

They often wear a lot of makeup, which comes off on the burka, and which is mainly for friends and family, though the eyes can still be seen through the burka's webbing.

Burka-clad women can be identified as young, old or fashionable by the way they walk, their clothes, shoes, bracelets, rings and nail polish.

Still, the burka is less a fashion accessory than a burden for many wearers _ foisted on them by overprotective male relatives who won't let them venture outside without it.

Dr. Saibzada, an obstetrician at a maternity hospital in Kabul, said that her husband could not care less if she wore a burka or not, but their family members gave her an ultimatum.

``They told me that if I want to stop wearing the burka, then I have to stop working, so I do it to keep my family happy," she said at the hospital, her burka pulled back to reveal her face so that only the crown of her head, shoulders and back were covered.

Khaja Ahmed Sadeqi, chief cleric at a mosque north of Kabul, said that was unIslamic.

``If a woman wants to wear a burka, no one should say don't wear it. It is her choice. If a woman does not want to wear a burka, and someone forces her to do so, this is a violation of Islamic law," said Sadeqi, who also serves as a Supreme Court judge.

``The Afghan burka is merely a social custom. In some areas, this social custom has become religion."

Government won't reveal number of prisoners taken by Canadians in Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE POLITICS INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 160

OTTAWA (CP) _ A Commons committee has been told the Taliban would be handed a propaganda coup if Canada revealed the number of prisoners it has captured in southern Afghanistan.

The foreign affairs committee demanded the Defence Department provide a breakdown of how many detainees had been captured since the mission began in 2002.

It also wanted to know how many of those prisoners had been handed over to Afghan authorities.

The Defence Department refused Monday to provide the figures, saying they could be used as propaganda by insurgents and possibly even lead to further attacks against Canadian soldiers in Kandahar.

The denial comes after reports in April that Taliban prisoners _ handed over to Afghans by Canadians _ had been abused.

Liberal foreign affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh said he cannot see how figures _ without names or locations attached _ could jeopardize national security. He said Canadian troops are in Afghanistan to help that country's society become more open and accountable and the Conservative government doesn't seem to be doing that at home.

Thousands flee as cyclone bears down on Persian Gulf, unnerves oil markets

DATE: 2007.06.05
KEYWORDS: BUSINESS DEFENCE ENVIRONMENT
INTERNATIONAL OIL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 769

MUSCAT, Oman (AP) _ A powerful cyclone menaced Oman's central coast with strong winds and rain early Wednesday, after thousands of residents fled to higher ground.

Forecasters said the Arabian Peninsula's strongest storm in 60 years was on a course for southern Iran and the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

Cyclone-force winds of Gonu, which had been churning northwest through the Indian Ocean, reached the Omani coastal towns Sur and Ra's al-Hadd. Civil Defence said the storm was dropping heavy rains on the capital Muscat and other nearby towns. But there were no immediate reports of any serious damage.

At 6 p.m. EDT, Cyclone Gonu was centred just off central Oman, about 225 kilometres southeast of Muscat and was travelling along the coastline at 13 kilometres an hour, the U.S. military's Joint Typhoon Warning Center said.

The storm had weakened somewhat during the day but was still packing winds of up to 170 km/h and churning up ocean waves, predicted to reach as high as 11 metres, Oman civil defence officials said.

Heavy rains pelted Muscat early Wednesday and streets were empty as most people stayed indoors, said blogger Vijayakumar Narayanan in a telephone interview.

"Everyone is cocooned in their houses," said Narayanan, whom NowPublic.com reached out to in Oman.

NowPublic.com is a journalism website with 98,000 members in 3,500 communities worldwide.

"Shops and businesses are closed."

Narayanan said city streets were quickly becoming flooded but there were no reports of wind damage.

He said the storm has alarmed many Omanis, unaccustomed to cyclones.

"They haven't had this kind of fear before."

Gonu is expected to skirt the region's biggest oil installations but could disrupt shipping in the Straits of Hormuz, causing a spike in prices, oil analysts said.

Oil prices rose Monday but retreated Tuesday, although the storm weighed heavily on the market.

"If the storm hits Iran, it's a much bigger story than Oman, given how much bigger an oil producer Iran is," said Antoine Haff of FIMAT USA, a brokerage unit of Societe Generale.

“At a minimum, it's likely to affect tanker traffic and to shut down some Omani oil production as a precautionary measure.”

Gonu, which means a bag made of palm leaves in the language of the Maldives, is expected to hit the eastern coast of Oman and head to the Gulf of Oman, said AccuWeather.com meteorologist Donn Washburn. The cyclone was expected to hit land in southeastern Iran late Wednesday or early Thursday, Washburn said.

The Joint Typhoon Warning Center, a U.S. military task force that tracks storms in the Pacific and Indian oceans, predicted rough seas in the Straits of Hormuz, the transport route for two-fifths of the world's oil and the southern entrance to the Gulf.

In Tehran, the Iranian government's Department of Meteorology predicted heavy rain and strong winds along the southeastern coast. Storm warnings had been issued and some damage was expected, the department said.

On Tuesday, as the cyclone approached, authorities evacuated nearly 7,000 people from Masirah, a lowland island off the east coast of Oman, said Gen. Malik bin Suleiman al-Muamri, head of the country's civil defence. Oman's main international airport in Muscat was also closed.

Masirah Island includes one of four air bases the Omani government allows the U.S. military to use for refuelling, logistics and storage, although little has been revealed publicly about U.S.-Oman military ties.

The Masirah base hosted U.S. B-1B bombers, C-130 transports and U.S. Special Forces AC-130 gunships during the war in Afghanistan and the United States has continued to have basing rights on the island.

U.S. forces are preparing for Gonu “just like anyone would prepare for such a cyclone,” said Lt. Denise Garcia, a spokeswoman for U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, which is based in Bahrain.

She declined to provide more details.

She said U.S. navy ships in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere in the region are also taking precautions to avoid Gonu but there was no major overhaul of operations. The U.S. military has offered its assistance to Oman but so far Omani authorities have not requested help, she said.

On Masirah, authorities said a state of emergency had been declared. Troops and police were mobilized to help provide shelter and medical services.

Families were also leaving their homes Tuesday on the mainland, officials said. The government said schools and public buildings were emptied to make room for the evacuees.

Oman's major oil installations, which were not directly in the storm's projected path and nowhere near as extensive as those of its neighbours, continued operations but took precautions as Gonu approached.

In neighbouring Saudi Arabia, the government said the country and oil markets would not be seriously affected by the storm.

But some oil analysts said the storm could have a damaging effect on the oil market.

Manouchehr Takin, an analyst at the Center for Global Energy Studies in London, said the real fear is the loading of tankers might be delayed by the storm.

“About 17-21 million barrels a day of oil are coming out of the Persian Gulf. Even if only some of the tankers are delayed, that could reduce the supply of oil and increase prices,” Takin said.

Even with the weaker wind speeds, Gonu is expected to be the strongest cyclone to hit the Arabian Peninsula since record keeping started in 1945.

A cyclone is the term used for hurricanes in the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific.

Update:Adds Harper comments, new headline

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS ENVIRONMENT

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 119

PARIS – Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he's not worried about a pair of promises made by the new government of France which could negatively affect Canada.

Harper, who is on a short visit to Paris, says he had an amicable meeting with Nicolas Sarkozy, the new president of France.

Harper says he has no fears about two of the promises the French president has made – a pullout of French troops from Afghanistan, and an import tax on countries that don't respect the Kyoto accord.

However, Harper insists that the countries are on the same page on both issues.

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon says that the carbon–tax policy is not aimed at Canada. And while France still wants its troops out of Afghanistan, the pullout is not imminent.

Fillon says France will respect the military commitment it has made to its partners.

(BN)

Death–Benefit

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: POLITICS DEFENCE FINANCE INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 134

OTTAWA — A constitutional expert says the Conservative government's denial of a 250–thousand–dollar death benefit to the families of unmarried soldiers killed in Afghanistan is a policy that's begging to be legally challenged.

Errol Mendes of the University of Ottawa says it's clearly established in law that discrimination based on martial status violates the Charter of Rights.

He's wondering why Veterans Affairs still supports the practice.

But he says military families will likely have to file a human rights complaint to overturn the policy.

The death benefit — available only to married soldiers — is part of the new Veterans Charter.

New Democrat veterans affairs critic Peter Stoffer says the refusal of the Tory government to change the policy flies in the face of its claim that it supports the troops.

But Veterans Affairs Minister Greg Thompson says the death benefit is not an insurance policy, but something to help military wives and children.

(BN)

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TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 293

Prime Minister Harper is in Paris today for meetings with France's new president and prime minister ahead of tomorrow's G-8 Summit in Germany.

The Paris sit-downs come a day after Harper outlined a new climate-change proposal he said could be used as a model for the entire world.

But his proposal doesn't appear to have garnered much attention overseas.

A quick scan of the international and European papers this morning indicates no references to Harper's plan. (4)

(Death-Benefit)

An constitutional law expert says denying a quarter-(m) million-dollar death benefit to families of unmarried soldiers killed in Afghanistan is a policy begging a legal challenge.

Errol Mendes of the University of Ottawa says discrimination based on martial status violates the Charter of Rights.

He suggests military families will likely have to file a human-rights complaint to overturn it. (4)

(Tory-Budget-Rebellion) (Audio: 05)

A Nova Scotia Tory M-P is threatening to vote against his government's budget implementation bill.

Bill Casey says the bill effectively kills his province's cherished offshore oil- and gas-revenue-sharing accord, and could cost Nova Scotia up to one-(b) billion dollars.

He met with Finance Minister Jim Flaherty last night, and will do so again today, in a last-ditch effort to get some changes. (4)

(BC-Pickton-Trial)

A man who helped accused serial killer Robert Pickton butcher pigs says he never killed anyone at Pickton's farm, and never saw anyone harmed.

Pat Casanova was once arrested, but never charged in many of the 26 murders for which Pickton is accused.

But Casanova testified yesterday at Pickton's B-C trial that he never saw any human remains at the farm. (4)

(Syria-Missing-Woman)

The family of a Vancouver woman who went missing more than two months ago in Syria, is offering a

25-thousand-dollar reward for news that could help locate her.

Matthew Vienneau says from Toronto that his family just wants his 32-year-old sister Nicole found.

Her gear and journal were found at her hotel in Syria. (4)

(ENT-Knocked Up-Suit)

The romantic-comedy ``Knocked Up" may be a hit at the box office, but Canadian author Rebecca Eckler isn't laughing.

The Calgary-based writer is suing the film's writer-director Judd Apatow and Universal Pictures for copyright infringement.

Eckler accuses them of stealing the premise from her 2005 book, ``Knocked Up: Confessions of a Hip Mother-to-be."

The book and film are about an up-and-coming reporter who gets drunk at a party and gets pregnant. (4)

(NewsWatch by Karen Rebot)

INDEX:Defence

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 63

GREENWOOD, N.S. – A Canadian military team working in southwest Asia to support the campaign against terrorism is returning home to Nova Scotia later this month.

Approximately 100 members of the mission support squadron will arrive at 14 Wing Greenwood on June 11 and June 15.

The squadron, comprising engineers, technicians, clerks, cooks and others, was part of Task Force Afghanistan.

Their deployment lasted six months.

(BN)

Afghan–Cda–Return

DATE: 2007.06.05
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 141

CFB TRENTON, Ontario — Another grieving family has met the flag–covered coffin of a loved one killed in Afghanistan.

Yesterday, the body of Master Corporal Darrell Priede arrived via Hercules transport plane at C–F–B Trenton in eastern Ontario.

A handful of military photographers could be seen with their cameras poised, documenting the final journey home of one of their own.

Members of Priede's grieving family stood huddled together alongside members of Canada's military brass, including Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier and Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor.

Holding a red rose, Priede's wife Angela was the first to approach the coffin to say her final goodbye to her husband, who had been in Afghanistan for less than six weeks.

The 30–year–old military photographer, who was based at C–F–B Gagetown, New Brunswick, died last Wednesday when the helicopter he was flying in was shot down in Afghanistan's volatile Helmand province.

(CP)

NMC

Afghan–Cda–Detainees

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE POLITICS INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 128

OTTAWA — A Commons committee has been told the Taliban would be handed a propaganda coup if Canada revealed the number of prisoners it has captured in southern Afghanistan.

The foreign affairs committee demanded the Defence Department provide a breakdown of how many detainees had been captured since the mission began in 2002.

It also wanted to know how many of those prisoners had been handed over to Afghan authorities.

The Defence Department refused yesterday to provide the figures, saying they could be used as propaganda by insurgents and possibly even lead to further attacks against Canadian soldiers in Kandahar.

The denial comes after reports in April that Taliban prisoners — handed over to Afghans by Canadians — had been abused.

Liberal foreign affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh says he cannot see how figures — without names or locations attached — could jeopardize national security.

(BN)

Afghan–Violence

DATE: 2007.06.05

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 97

KABUL — The U–S–led coalition says a gunbattle and air strikes have killed an estimated two dozen Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan.

The Taliban fighters attacked Afghan and coalition troops with rockets and gunfire in the Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province, sparking a four–hour battle.

Fighter aircraft bombed three enemy positions, a coalition statement said.

It said an estimated two dozen enemy fighters were killed during the battle but gave no further details on the casualty toll.

Also Monday, a roadside bomb injured two soldiers in the eastern province Khost.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force said it knew ISAF troops were involved in that incident but it had no further details.

(AP)

TA

Politicians finally speak up for Khadr; Botched trial has forced MPs to acknowledge rights of the Canadian

IDNUMBER 200706060140

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DATE: 2007.06.06

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: News

PAGE: A18

ILLUSTRATION: Reuters file photo Canada did not complain when the U.S. refused consular access to Omar Khadr, one of those imprisoned at Guantanamo, Thomas Walkom writes. ;

BYLINE: Thomas Walkom

SOURCE: Toronto Star

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WORD COUNT: 616

Perhaps the most significant effect of the botched Omar Khadr trial at Guantanamo Bay is that it has finally forced Canadian politicians to speak up for a countryman they've spent five years trying to ignore.

"He is a Canadian citizen with the rights of a Canadian citizen and the government should take up his case actively with U.S. authorities," deputy Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff said on Monday.

What was striking about that statement was not its content, which – given the fact that Khadr is being held contrary to international law in a prison that the Liberals themselves have condemned as abhorrent – was remarkably namby– pamby. (What exactly does "take up his case actively" mean?) Rather it was that a senior Canadian politician was willing to say anything.

Certainly, MPs have not been falling over themselves to speak up for the rights of the 20–year–old Scarborough man. In the five years since Khadr's incarceration, his name has been raised in the Commons a total of once – by former New Democrat MP Svend Robinson. That happened in October 2002, shortly after U.S. troops wounded and captured the then 15–year–old after a fierce battle in Afghanistan.

Outside the Commons, politicians weren't much more vocal. At one point, then– NDP leader Alexa McDonough called on Ottawa to ensure that Khadr was accorded the full protection of international law. The then–Liberal government said that it would.

In fact, it did the reverse. It did not complain when the U.S., breaking another international treaty along the way, refused Canada standard consular access to Khadr. Instead, it entered into a secret agreement with Washington – revealed only later – to have Canadian security agents interview him at Guantanamo and hand over any information gleaned to his U.S. captors.

Neither the Liberals nor their Conservative successors said or did anything when Khadr alleged he was mistreated by U.S. guards who – using tactics borrowed from the KGB – shackled him in so–called stress positions or used him as a human mop. Nor did they say or do anything when outside observers with access to Guantanamo, including the FBI, confirmed that such mistreatment of prisoners did take place.

The U.S. ambassador was not called in for an explanation. There is no suggestion Ottawa even sent the Americans a mild note questioning their right to arrest a minor and hold him incommunicado for three years before charging him.

Nor, except for isolated comments like those of McDonough and Robinson, has the NDP been much better. On Monday, Windsor MP Joe Comartin made all of the appropriate civil liberties noises. But otherwise, the silence from that party has been deafening. I can find no record of NDP Leader Jack Layton uttering Khadr's name.

Out in the real world, however, more were beginning to question the U.S. handling of its so-called terror suspects, and in particular the jerry-built military commissions that President George W. Bush constructed to try them. To anyone even remotely attracted by the rule of law, such commissions – with their reliance on secret evidence obtained by torture – were too absurd to take seriously. Even Khadr's U.S. military lawyers slammed them as kangaroo courts.

Mainstream Muslim groups like the Council of American-Islamic Relations Canada took up Khadr's case, as did some Canadian lawyers. But among politicians, radio silence ruled.

Monday's surprise decision by a U.S. military judge to throw out Khadr's war crimes indictment changed all of that. On paper, the decision was based on a small but crucial technicality. But its political effect was to draw even more attention to a detention and trial system that is ludicrously unfair.

So unfair that even Canada's notoriously publicity-shy politicians have been forced to weigh in.

End of line for O'Connor?; Buck-passing in soldiers' funeral fiasco could lead to defence minister's departure, analysts say

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PAGE: A17
BYLINE: bruce campion-smith
SOURCE: Toronto Star
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WORD COUNT: 510

Gordon O'Connor's attempt to blame the military bureaucracy for a mix-up in paying the funeral expenses of fallen soldiers has sparked an "ugly" mood within the defence department and could hasten his departure as defence minister, analysts say.

O'Connor, a former general, has survived misleading Canadians on key issues such as the role of the Red Cross in monitoring detainees in Afghanistan and stating that the lightly armoured G-wagon jeeps were restricted from dangerous convoys, when they were not.

But passing the buck may have done him in. New officers are schooled to take responsibility, and O'Connor won few friends when he cut the legs out from under Gen. Rick Hillier, the chief of defence staff, in the funeral expenses fiasco.

"The mood is ugly," said one officer, who asked not to be identified.

Lincoln and Laurie Dinning went public last week with their complaint that the military had still not paid all the funeral expenses for their son, Cpl. Matthew Dinning, killed a year ago in Afghanistan.

With Hillier standing beside him, O'Connor blamed the military bureaucracy for the problems, saying he gave orders last year that the families of fallen soldiers be fairly compensated for funeral expenses.

"This would indicate my direction was not followed and I can assure you this will be dealt with accordingly and corrected as soon as possible," O'Connor told reporters.

But that response has military analysts speculating about when – not if – O'Connor will be dumped.

"You delegate authority but never responsibility. That's a basic concept," said one military expert, who asked not to be identified. "I would suggest O'Connor might not see the end of the summer. There could be a reshuffle, but I think he'll retire on his farm."

Steve Staples, director of the Rideau Institute, an Ottawa policy body, said the latest controversy is further proof O'Connor shouldn't be defence minister. "O'Connor has been a disaster in that portfolio. Every time he opens his mouth he seems to have to put his foot in it," Staples said.

End of line for O'Connor?; Buck-passing in soldiers' funeral fiasco could lead to defence minister's departure

Still, Staples noted that O'Connor, who survived a January cabinet shuffle, has weathered recent criticisms with the public backing of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

"The latest stumbles just show he's not up to the job but Harper is not one to be easily persuaded otherwise," Staples said. "I really felt in January that his time was up."

Retired general Lewis MacKenzie doesn't think that Harper will replace his defence minister at a time when Canada is embroiled in the Afghan conflict.

"It's not a major war but it is your preoccupation, and a change of minister may have some ripple effects that may not be desirable," MacKenzie said yesterday.

"I would imagine that the Prime Minister – and this is just speculation – is pretty happy with the performance of his defence minister," he said.

Still, MacKenzie says, O'Connor did himself few favours last week.

"You don't get yourself in trouble by accepting responsibility. Things have a habit of coming out wrong from Gordon. Other people can say exactly the same thing and it wouldn't raise the ire of anybody."

O'Connor will be on the hot seat this afternoon, before the Commons foreign affairs committee, answering questions on the issue of detainees in Afghanistan. Joining him will be Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, International Co-Operation Minister Josee Verner, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day and Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs.

A Canadian in Gitmo

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SECTION: Letter

PAGE: AA07

ILLUSTRATION: Janet Hamlin Reuters In this courtroom sketch, Canadian Omar Khadr, 20, who has been detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the U.S. for about five years, listens on Monday as charges against him were thrown out by a military judge. ;

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 526

Free Omar Khadr from U.S. ordeal

Editorial, June 5

Your editorial calling for the U.S. to release Canadian Omar Khadr from its Guantanamo Bay prison camp was well-meaning but naive. The ruling by a U.S. military judge that the tribunals set up to try suspected terrorists have no jurisdiction over most Guantanamo detainees would shame many governments into changing their ways. Expecting it to have that effect on the U.S. administration is foolish.

The U.S. government is led by a lawless cabal that has proudly flouted not only its disregard for international rules of conduct and human rights, but for the country's own laws. Consider that President George W. Bush has attached to legislation passed by Congress more than 750 so-called signing letters stating that he has no intention of obeying the particular law if he feels it is in his interests to ignore it.

When you consider also the blatant illegality of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the administration's unlawful domestic spying program, the secret CIA prisons and "interrogation" centres in various human-rights-challenged jurisdictions, what stands revealed is a rogue regime that cannot be expected to do anything but thumb its nose at legal rulings and well-intentioned interventions by its allies.

It is equally naive to urge Ottawa to intercede on Khadr's behalf. Our government has enthusiastically signed on to Washington's "war on terror," and expecting it to do anything that might anger its ideological exemplar is not realistic.

Regime change in both capitals is urgently called for, if the rule of law and regard for civil rights are to escape being relegated to the status of quaint historical curiosities.

Richard van Abbe, Toronto

Victory puts Khadr in limbo

June 5

Many people were surprised to hear the verdict of the military judge who threw out the war-crimes charges against Omar Khadr, the young Canadian who has been held in Guantanamo Bay for more than half a decade. The total disregard and lack of sympathy toward this young man is due to negative stereotypes that exist today

about Muslims in general.

When the suspect is a Muslim, people forget the legal principle that everyone is innocent until proven otherwise. It seems that when you are a Muslim, you are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt until proven otherwise.

The media have already tried and convicted Khadr, who was detained when he was 15 years old.

Imagine for a second if he was from a white family. You can imagine the outpouring of sympathy, appeals, public outcries and even demonstrations for the sake of saving the "innocent child." No one, including our government, has shed tears of sympathy for Khadr, who has been deprived his basic and fundamental rights as a human being and a citizen of this great land.

Abubakar N. Kasim, Toronto

Why should Canadian taxpayers have to foot the legal as well as any travel bill for Omar Khadr if he returns to Canada? After all, it was his and his family's choice to go and fight in Afghanistan. Those who want to bring him home or fight on his behalf should come up with the cash and not keep burdening the ordinary Canadian taxpayer.

The same goes for other Canadians who go abroad and put themselves in dangerous situations and then expect ordinary, hard-working taxpayers to bail them out.

Derrick Rodricks, Ottawa

Stephen Harper

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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 44

Canadian Prime minister

Elected Jan. 23, 2006

New kid on the block

Harper's popularity has taken hits over the war in Afghanistan, and his government is seen as out of sync with the public's concern with climate change. He plans to side with European nations on stronger greenhouse gas targets.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Liberals soften stand on pullout date

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DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A4

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 361

WORD COUNT: 352

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Liberal Leader Stephane Dion yesterday opened the door to keeping Canadian troops in Afghanistan after February, 2009, but insisted they would have to be withdrawn from their current combat mission in the volatile southern region.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Dion said he wants the combat mission of Canada's 2,500 soldiers based in Kandahar to end, but said Canada could still retain troops to assist the NATO mission.

"We could have a role different from the combat mission in Kandahar that the Prime Minister would like to make interminable," Mr. Dion said in French.

Asked whether the Liberals would be willing to switch places with troops in another, presumably safer, part of Afghanistan, Mr. Dion hinted that he might back that sort of deployment.

"Should Canada remain in other regions on a military basis? Should it reorient its effort otherwise? We would be ready to discuss this with our partners." The Liberals have been adamant in saying that Canada should advise NATO that it will be ending its military commitment in Afghanistan in early 2009 and pulling out its troops. But in recent weeks, the Liberals have been expressing a more nuanced view, saying that they would be willing to support a scaled-back military presence, provided Canadian troops were redeployed to less dangerous parts of the country.

They have begun to talk about "rotation" among the NATO troops, implying that they would not be opposed to the Canadian troops switching places with soldiers from another coalition partner.

Defence critic Denis Coderre said that while Canadian troops should be out of Kandahar, they should still help back provincial reconstruction teams and could train Afghan troops and police. "They could do other things in Afghanistan," he said in an interview.

But he insisted that the Canadians should be removed from the line of fire.

"The troops have done their job in the south," Mr. Coderre said.

"We're done in terms of combat." Canadian forces represent less than 10 per cent of the 37,000 NATO troops in the country, but, along with the Dutch, British and Americans, among others, have been fighting in some of the most dangerous areas.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Stephane Dion

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberal Party

THE G8 SUMMIT: FOREIGN AID Canada's failure on Africa front angers experts Despite \$700-million shortfall, Prime Minister defends action on budget

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570183

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A10

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 628

WORD COUNT: 604

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA The Harper government's disclosure that Canada will fall \$700-million short of a two-year-old budget commitment to double its annual aid to Africa by next year has outraged foreign-aid experts. Yet most say it doesn't surprise them either.

"Africa will be taking a hit," said Gerry Barr, president of Canadian Council for International Co-operation, an umbrella group of non-governmental organizations, churches and unions. "And of all the places that ought to be taking a hit, would you put Africa at the front of the line?" The former Liberal government announced in its 2005 budget that it would double its aid to Africa to \$2.8-billion by 2008-09 and laid out a detailed plan to get there. Canada's promise was included as part of a G8 plan to double aid to Africa reached at the group's summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, in July that year.

But as it turns out, Canada will fall 25 per cent short of that goal, and in the end, Africa will get only \$2.1-billion in 2008-09, which prompted anti-poverty activist Bob Geldof to accuse Canada this week of not living up to its commitments.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper said on Monday that this was still a doubling of the Africa budget because Canada spent a lot less on aid to the continent in the base year of 2003-04 than expected.

Jeffrey Sachs, the world-renowned development economist, said the shortfall is typical of Canada's failure to do its share to help the world's poorest nations.

"There is no Canadian leadership on this issue," he said in an interview, noting Canada is spending far less than half of the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product in foreign aid first devised by former prime minister Lester Pearson. "Canada is nowhere to be found on this commitment at all." Mr. Sachs said the problem began under the Liberals. "Not only is there no commitment, there is no life in Canada's efforts. It's a huge surprise for us who believe in Canada's role in the world.

"We don't hear Canada's voice on major issues." It emerged yesterday that former prime minister Paul Martin's government quietly reneged on the original target of \$2.8-billion between the budget in February, 2005, and the summit at Gleneagles five months later by using the revised figure for 2003-04 as the basis for calculating the increase. But the new goal of \$2.1-billion was never stated explicitly, Mr. Barr said.

Mr. Sachs was reflecting a similar view held by Mr. Geldof, who excoriated Canada this week for failing to meet its aid commitments and said it is trying to block this year's G8 summit from including firm dollar targets in its final communique.

Ian Smillie, research director at Partnership Canada–Africa, said the Harper government has pushed Africa aside in favour of Afghanistan, which has become the largest single recipient of Canadian aid.

Mr. Sachs, who heads Columbia University's Earth Institute, said the money going to Afghanistan and Iraq is really not development aid but "security spending." The issue came up during yesterday's House of Commons Question Period, with Liberal MPs accusing the government of shortchanging Africa.

International Co–operation Minister Josee Verner responded that the previous government's original promise contained "errors" because Ottawa actually spent only \$1.05–billion on aid to Africa in 2003–04 rather than the \$1.4–billion that had been projected.

In the Commons, Ms. Verner said the figure for aid to Africa in 2005–06 will end up at \$1.7–billion, the first time that number has been revealed.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Africa

SUBJECT TERM:foreign aid; government finance; political; summit conference

Not another spy agency

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570169

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE:

SECTION: Editorial

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 616

WORD COUNT: 637

After almost 18 months of indecision, the Conservative government has apparently decided to expand the mandate of Canada's existing spy service rather than create a separate foreign intelligence agency.

Good. When resources are scarce and threats are immediate, Ottawa should not be in the business of assembling another agency from scratch. It should expand its existing agency.

There are already too many narrowly focused intelligence silos struggling to operate in a world where terrorists collude across international boundaries, unrestricted by operational mandates. As Jim Judd, director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, told the Senate's national security committee last week, "Putting both functions in one agency would allow one to better build on the existing methodology, strengths, technologies, expertise that already exists in one agency." No need for duplication.

The Conservatives quietly hatched the idea for two separate spy agencies during the federal election campaign of early 2006. The need, they said, was to allow the government to "independently counter threats before they reach Canada" with a foreign intelligence agency similar to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. But CSIS already conducts covert operations abroad where there is a direct threat to Canada's security. In recent years, agents have operated in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon. The possibility of two spy agencies brushing up against each other on foreign ground – one collecting foreign intelligence while the other looks for national security intelligence outside Canada – is a recipe for trouble.

That logic apparently got through. Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day has acknowledged the start-up costs of a new agency could be huge and it might take several years to set the thing up. But CSIS has resource problems. Personnel are stretched. Still scrambling to recover from the downsizing of the mid-1990s, the service must now cope with the retirement of the baby boomers. Meanwhile, its chores keep multiplying; it must perform security checks on all refugees, including intensive examinations of the increasing number of claimants from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Although CSIS analysts can scrounge enormous amounts of information from open sources, including about 5,000 websites that are terrorist-related, it is difficult to obtain information about specific individuals. This is where agents in the field can help. To expand its mandate, CSIS would have to increase its training in foreign languages and communications technology, but the basis is already there.

There are different international models for handling foreign and domestic intelligence. For decades, the United States, Britain and Australia have separated domestic security, foreign intelligence and signals collection. But that model has huge flaws; the U.S.

domestic and foreign agencies did not share data that could have thwarted the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Aware of

the dangers, the most recent Western jurisdictions to set up intelligence agencies, New Zealand and the Netherlands, have opted for merged foreign and domestic models. Meanwhile, because of the fear of another terrorist incident, competing agencies within the U.S. are working more closely together, as are agencies within Britain, despite their different cultures and mandates.

Canada has not had a good experience with new intelligence agencies.

It created CSIS in 1984, carving it out of the RCMP to fix problems identified by the McDonald commission into RCMP wrongdoing. The result was new problems; the silo-building, the jealous hoarding of data, arguably allowed the two agencies to miss Canada's worst terrorist incident, the Air India explosion of 1985. Those silos still exist. The addition of another agency, whatever the clarity of its operational mandate, would likely mean less shared information.

Mr. Day is right to expand Canada's foreign intelligence capabilities.

But Ottawa should stick with the agency that is already in the field.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: internal security; defence; espionage; government; political

ORGANIZATION NAME: Canadian Security Intelligence Service

G8 SUMMIT: CARBON TAX Harper, Sarkozy start off on right foot In runup to G8, Kyoto and Afghanistan dominate meeting between Canadian PM and French President

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570160

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A13 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: BRIAN LAGHI

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Paris FRANCE

WORDS: 503

WORD COUNT: 495

BRIAN LAGHI PARIS France's new political leadership gave Stephen Harper a mulligan yesterday for his government's Kyoto record while also pledging not to pull its forces from Afghanistan any time soon.

The Prime Minister, who was in the French capital to meet with France's new President, Nicolas Sarkozy, and his just-appointed Prime Minister, Francois Fillon, was told yesterday that Canada is not seen as a primary target of a potential carbon tax that France would like to see the European Union slap on countries that don't commit to a post-Kyoto greenhouse-gas deal.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," said Mr. Fillon, after meeting with Mr. Harper. "What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve is enforceable targets under an international protocol." Mr. Fillon was discussing a French proposal to ask the European Union to apply a carbon tax on countries that don't commit themselves to a new international Kyoto-style protocol after 2012. During his news conference, he was asked whether Mr. Harper's "made-in-Canada" policy to bring down greenhouse gases might prompt France to consider Canada as a target for the tax.

France has said in the past that the countries it is aiming at include China and India, arguing that Europe is put at a competitive disadvantage because its businesses must bear the cost of bringing down greenhouse gases while those of many other nations do not.

Canada's own Kyoto record is among the worst in the G8.

Earlier in the day, during a separate meeting, Mr. Sarkozy told Mr. Harper that France does not have a timetable set for the pullout of forces from Afghanistan.

France currently has about 1,000 soldiers there, but, unlike Canada's troops, they are outside the most notorious hot spots. Mr. Sarkozy has said he wants to limit France's role in the country.

"I had a good discussion with the President on [Afghanistan]," Mr. Harper said. "Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent. At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there. He indicated to me no particular timetable to leave, so I think we're on the same page on both those matters." After walking from Mr. Sarkozy's official residence off the famous

Champs Elysees avenue to a local restaurant, the popular Mr. Sarkozy waded into the crowd, shaking hands. Mr. Harper joined him as some residents applauded the two men from elegant balcony apartments overhead.

Mr. Harper and Mr. Sarkozy are to join in an expanded meeting of the G8 group of industrialized countries starting today, where the issue of climate change is expected to dominate. The meeting will include the leaders of a number of developing countries.

The meeting is seen as crucial in the effort to bring the international community together on what to do when the Kyoto environmental protocol runs out in the year 2012.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; France; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign relations; visits; kyoto protocol; environment; defence; policy; political

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper; Nicolas Sarkozy

ASIA–PACIFIC An Afghanistan rebuilt starts with a rebuilt private sector

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570152

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: B11

BYLINE: MARCUS GEE

SECTION: Report on Business

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 744

WORD COUNT: 754

MARCUS GEE How do you start a business in a country of suicide bombings, blackouts, bribes, drug trading and rampant illiteracy? Everyone agrees that if Afghanistan is ever to get back on its feet, it must create a working economy with a vibrant private sector.

More than five years after the fall of the Taliban, it hasn't even come close.

With a per capita GDP of just \$315 (U.S.) a year, Afghanistan has few roads, few trained workers and only a handful of barely functional banks. The biggest legal exporter is a carpet maker that earns just \$40–million a year.

The only really thriving business is opium, which accounts for one–third of economic activity. Much of the rest comes from international aid, and aid alone won't do the trick. No country has ever graduated from poverty on handouts.

To get out of the hole they are in, Afghans have to start growing things, making things, selling things, buying things.

But how? That was the question at a conference held over the past two days in a Kabul hotel. The conference was organized by the Aga Khan Development Network along with the World Bank and other supporters, including The Globe and Mail, a charitable backer of the Aga Khan's development work. It brought together bankers, businessmen, academics and government ministers to discuss how to create an "enabling environment" for the private sector.

Every Afghan official who appeared, from President Hamid Karzai down, agreed emphatically that helping get business going was a key to the country's future. Mr. Karzai, as dignified and as eloquent as always, reminded the crowd that Afghans are historically an enterprising people. That spirit was embodied by the Kabuliwallah, the "man from Kabul" who was a fictional seller of dried nuts and fruits in a short story by the renowned Indian author Rabindranath Tagore. Today's Kabuliwallahs, Mr. Karzai said, are the country's hope. Only ambitious, clever business people can build an economy that creates jobs and prosperity.

But in the conference rooms and seminars, those same business people complained about government obstruction. Far from "enabling" them, officials were making their lives hell with demands for payoffs and paperwork. One cellphone operator said he needed to get signatures from 20 government offices before going into business – "and every signature was an opportunity for extortion." Businesses face hassles at the border,

where their goods are often held up by inspectors or delayed by inadequate bridges and other crossings. They face hassles over electrical power. It comes on only a few hours a day so they have to make their own with costly diesel generators.

Above all, they have hassles over security. At one water bottler, 36 of 185 employees are security men. "I have three big problems," a local banker says. "Number one is security, number two is security, number three is security." No wonder that when the World Bank measured ease of doing business in 175 countries, Afghanistan came 162nd.

The one modern local factory, a Coca-Cola bottler run by a family of Afghans who are based in Dubai, isn't making money and isn't sure when it will. The best local hotel, the swanky Serena, part of a chain run by the Aga Khan, is half empty most of the time.

Afghanistan imports almost everything – chicken from Brazil, jam, tomato paste and mud bricks from Pakistan. The Kabuliwallah's business, fruits and nuts, has dried up. Afghanistan used to have 60 per cent of the world market in dried raisins, pistachios, apricots, walnuts and almonds. Now it has 2 per cent.

Still, there is money to be made for those who want to chance it. A local cellphone operator is booming. Vancouver's Hunter Dickinson Inc. is bidding for the right to exploit the rich Aynak copper deposit.

"There are such great opportunities because it's so underdeveloped – precious stones, agriculture, mining, it's all wide open," one diplomat said. "But you need gumption. Those without gumption need not apply." With better governance and better security, and a few more years just to pull itself back together, Afghanistan could still build the economic engine it needs to pull itself out of poverty. But does it have that long? A sense of urgency hung over this week's meeting in Kabul. Everyone knows that unless the country acts boldly and soon to give business a chance, it might be too late.

mgee@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:economy; development; conferences; business; regulation; internal security

ORGANIZATION NAME: Aga Khan Development Network

No ticket to ride

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 071570137
DATE: 2007.06.06
PAGE: A14
BYLINE: DAVID CALVERLEY
SECTION: Letter to the Edit
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Kleinburg, Ont.
WORDS: 114
WORD COUNT: 125

David Calverley Kleinburg, Ont.

Supporters of Omar Khadr compare him to child soldiers in other conflicts around the world (Give Omar Khadr A Ticket To Canada – editorial, June 5). Mr. Khadr, they argue, is not responsible for his actions because he was only 15 when he was captured in Afghanistan.

There is no comparison between Mr. Khadr and child soldiers. Real child soldiers are forcibly taken from their parents (who are often killed), drugged, brainwashed and abused into becoming killers.

Mr. Khadr became a soldier/terrorist because his family encouraged it. He was a willing participant. Where was the coercion? Comparing him to child soldiers insults those children forced to fight and scarred for life as a result.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; United States

SUBJECT TERM: children; strife; justice; prisoners of war; terrorism

PERSONAL NAME: Omar Khadr

No ticket to ride

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570129

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: YVETTE WOLFE

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Toronto ONT

WORDS: 81

WORD COUNT: 110

Yvette Wolfe Toronto I feel frustrated and outraged at our government's indifference to Omar Khadr's treatment. The military judge's ruling represents a golden opportunity for Canada to step up and take a stand against the legal limbo the Bush administration has left Mr. Khadr in for so long (U.S. Terror Trials In Doubt As Khadr Case Crumbles – June 5). Regardless of Mr. Khadr's family history, Canada needs to assume its moral responsibility to ensure the rights of its citizen.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; United States

SUBJECT TERM: children; strife; justice; prisoners of war; terrorism

PERSONAL NAME: Omar Khadr

No ticket to ride

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570128

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: DOUGLAS L. MARTIN

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Hamilton, Ont.

WORDS: 18

WORD COUNT: 28

Douglas L. Martin Hamilton, Ont.

Re Give Omar Khadr A Ticket To Canada: And why not a job at The Globe and Mail?

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; United States

SUBJECT TERM: children; strife; justice; prisoners of war; terrorism

PERSONAL NAME: Omar Khadr

IN BRIEF NATO attack sinks Taliban boat, Afghans say

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071570005

DATE: 2007.06.06

PAGE: A13

BYLINE:

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: NYT

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Kabul AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 88

WORD COUNT: 86

NYT Kabul The Afghan Defence Ministry said yesterday that a boat full of fleeing Taliban fighters had been fired upon by NATO helicopters and sunk in the Helmand River, in southern Afghanistan.

All on board, between 20 and 30 guerrillas, drowned, said General Zaher Azimi, a ministry spokesman.

It was the second sinking on the river reported in recent days.

Another boat, carrying about 60 people, sank in the same area late last week, although there were conflicting reports as to whether those aboard had been civilians or Taliban fighters.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; deaths

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

On the world stage Prime Minister Harper's policies and priorities, particularly in Afghanistan, are changing Canada's international image

SOURCETAG 0706060370

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.06.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Editorial/Opinion

PAGE: 9

ILLUSTRATION: file photo Brig. Gen. Tim Grant shows Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper the area of operation in Ma'Sum Ghar, Kandahar province, Afghanistan during a visit in May.

BYLINE: SHEILA COPPS AND LICIA CORBELLA

COLUMN: Point Counter Point

WORD COUNT: 1574

Is Prime Minister Stephen Harper doing a better job on the international stage for Canada than his Liberal predecessors? After 16 months watching him work, it all depends on who you ask. Sheila Copps, a Sun Media columnist and former federal cabinet minister, is unimpressed. Licia Corbella, editor of the Calgary Sun, is more charitable. Here is their recent exchange of often pointed e-mails.

COPPS: With only 16 months in office Prime Minister Stephen Harper is making waves around the world. But the wrong kind of waves. Canada was always known internationally for our independence. We did not follow George W. Bush to Iraq and, despite some initial business moaning, it looks like Canada made the right choice. But the world is wondering what happened to Canada. Our cultural independence is on the block and so is our international cultural budget. The world is wondering whether Canada has jumped in bed with Bush and they wonder what happened to a proud independent country?

CORBELLA: Thanks Sheila, I actually got a belly laugh reading your e-mail. Coming from someone who sat on the front benches with Prime Minister Jean Chretien, the lover of despots and dictators, it's an almost delusional statement. Like you, however, I was very pleased that Chretien didn't join the war in Iraq. Outside of that, Canada's international reputation plummeted during the 12-year Liberal reign of error. Remember how Chretien allowed Canadian citizens' rights to be trampled during the APEC summit in Vancouver to prevent "any embarrassment" to Indonesia's murderous leader, Suharto? Seeing Chretien mug for the camera with Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe doesn't make it to the top of my most proud Canadian moment list. You say the "world is wondering what happened to Canada." Where's the evidence of that?

COPPS: Actually you are mixing two agendas. Any prime minister should provide a safe welcome for leaders from other countries. Whether in Kananaskis, Halifax or on the campus of the University of British Columbia, good manners count. But it was not the cornerstone of our administration. Every time I turn around Prime Minister Harper is trying to convince an unconvinced country that Afghanistan is forever. His law-and-order agenda at home and abroad is reminiscent of Steve's friend George. I actually thought the PM was smart enough to promote a moderate agenda and be the progressive of his Conservative party. Alas, it was not to be and that is why he is perpetually stuck in minority territory.

CORBELLA: Who knew "good manners" includes pepper spraying peacefully protesting citizens to protect the murderous ego of Suharto from "any embarrassment"? The protesters had "good manners"; your government didn't. Don't recall you being outraged about that violation of human rights, Sheila. As for

Afghanistan, just because Canadians aren't convinced of the mission's merits doesn't mean it doesn't have any. It was the Liberals who committed us to Afghanistan and thanks to Liberal PM Paul Martin's infamous inability to make a decision, when it came time to decide what second mission our troops would take on he dithered so long, we got stuck with the heavy lifting in volatile Kandahar. Also, 2009 is hardly forever.

COPPS: Actually, when we committed to Afghanistan it was for a fixed rotation. The idea is to give sufficient notice so that another country or group of countries can step in where we left off. When the prime minister hinted at extending the mission beyond 2009 he is obviously gambling that it would be a good election issue. He is also ignoring a Parliament approved deadline. Why would any ally want to step into that hornet's nest when Canada's commitment is unlimited? To me that sounds a lot like forever. Take heed of the views from Afghanistan's neighbours and other allies in the war on terror. Pakistan is suggesting we actually talk to the Taliban.

CORBELLA: Having been to Afghanistan I know the vast majority of the people there — especially the women — want us there. More than seven million girls are now going to school thanks largely to our efforts. The people have hope again. As for Canada's independence, Canada led the way for the rest of the world after Hamas was elected by the Palestinian people to form government. Harper declared that while Canada would still fund humanitarian work there, it would no longer put Canadian dollars directly into government hands because Hamas vows to destroy Israel. The rest of the world followed Harper's lead, not the other way around. That includes Bush. While Chretien and Martin kissed up to China, the Conservatives refuse to play by their rules. China is now trying to tell Canada to stop sending government officials to Taiwan. The Conservative government is telling China it will go wherever it pleases. Sounds like independence to me.

COPPS: You have conveniently forgotten the original point about a never-ending commitment. There are many places around the world that would love to have Canada's help. Does Darfur come to mind? But obviously if we refuse to seek a non-military solution and we provide an open commitment past 2009 there is no incentive for anyone else to help. As for leadership, the prime minister sees the world in black and white while in reality it is far more nuanced. The rules for democracy are very different in many countries beyond our borders. Are we to defend them all. And where are our allies?

CORBELLA: Actually, the "original point" was, and I quote you: "the world is wondering... what happened to a proud independent country?" You conveniently forgot to answer what your proof is of that still unsubstantiated claim. Also, now you ask where are our allies? Huh? In the same base where our soldiers are stationed in Kandahar, they are joined by British, Dutch, Italian, American, Spanish and other allied soldiers, all UN sanctioned and NATO run. As for a never-ending commitment, as Liberal Senator Colin Kenny points out, imagine what would have happened in the Second World War had Britain and Canada said, "we'll fight until 1941 and then we'll let our allies come in." We'd all be speaking German right now and our flag would have a swastika on it instead of a maple leaf.

COPPS: The war on terror is a very different matter than the Nazi occupation. In a sense we are the referees in a civil war very similar to the role we could play in Darfur or other world trouble spots. If neighbouring Pakistan sees a benefit in talking to the Taliban we have to heed their advice. They are allies who know Afghanistan better than anyone. As for Hamas, any person viewing Israeli foreign policy has deemed the Israeli incursion into Lebanon an utter failure. The most disappointed are Israeli citizens looking for peace. While Hezbollah and Hamas build their constituency, our foreign policy is certainly not leading in a positive direction. You keep asking where is my proof? Spend a few days hanging around the United Nations, Brussels or the OECD and you should hear the scuttlebutt that our reputation as an agent for peace is a footnote in history. I guess the ultimate proof will come in the next election. Harper is gambling that people will see this as a repeat of the Second World War. The new millennium brought a new type of terror and conventional warriors won't win.

CORBELLA: Pakistan sees a benefit in talking to the Taliban because the Taliban were schooled in and

On the world stage Prime Minister Harper's policies and priorities, particularly in Afghanistan, are changing

funded by Pakistan. Indeed, many Taliban are Pakistanis. Surely, you know that? What's more, 99% of Afghans hate the Taliban with a passion. I hope you know that, too. We do not "have to" take our marching orders from Pakistan, Sheila. I'm frankly shocked that someone urging us to be more independent would suggest we do so. I realize the Liberals love Hamas and never wanted to declare it a terrorist organization, but the Conservatives tend to call a spade a spade. The rest of the world followed, including France and other countries practiced in the art of appeasement and sophistry. Canada is way more independent now than under the Liberals. Canada has re-established our sovereignty in the north — over the objections of the U.S., Norway, Finland and others. What's more, PM Paul Martin, was so afraid of Bush it took him 64 days just to build up enough courage to telephone the President after a NAFTA ruling in favour of Canada on softwood lumber tariffs. By then another ruling had come down that favoured the U.S. and Martin's dithering cost Canada valuable ground on the file. By contrast, it took Harper just about two weeks longer to hammer out a resolution to the dispute. That's leadership and independence.

Harper: France 'on same page' PM says Sarkozy's 'committed' to mission in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0706060597

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.06.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 20

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Jens Meyer, AP Members of the anti-globalization group Oxfam wear costumes of the G8 leaders, including Stephen Harper, second from left, yesterday in Rostock, Germany. The G8 summit begins today in the nearby resort town of Heiligendamm.

BYLINE: ALEX PANETTA, CP

DATELINE: PARIS

WORD COUNT: 320

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and newly-elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy met on the eve of today's G8 meeting to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

The two leaders took a stroll through the streets of Paris yesterday to a fancy restaurant where they dined following their first official encounter. Harper called Sarkozy a great friend of Canada.

The new French government's first act of friendship was to reassure Harper that he has nothing to fear from two of Sarkozy's key election promises -- to pull French troops out of Afghanistan and slap an import tax on goods from countries that failed to respect the Kyoto accord.

Both policies could cause trouble for Canada. But Harper left Paris without concern.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," Harper said about the import tax. "What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve ... is enforceable targets under an international protocol."

On Monday, Harper had told an audience in Germany that it's impossible for Canada to meet its goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

As for Afghanistan, Harper said he has no fear France would suddenly pull out its 1,000 troops.

"Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent," Harper said. "At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there."

"He indicated to me no particular timetable to leave. So I think we're on the same page on both those matters."

Harper weighed in cautiously on another matter expected to surface at the G8 summit: The increasingly antagonistic talk from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin has warned that Moscow could once again aim its missiles at Europe -- just like during the Cold War -- if Washington presses ahead with its plans for an anti-missile defence system.

Putin says the U.S. plans are aimed at Russia rather than rogue states, such as Iran. But Harper called that

concern ill-founded. "We are convinced that NATO's intentions are rather clear," Harper said.

In Prague, U.S. President George W. Bush yesterday promised Putin he has nothing to fear from the missile defence shield. "The Cold War is over," Bush insisted.

"Russia is not our enemy," Bush emphasized.

In a swift turn of events, China joined Russia in criticizing the anti-missile system. Then, Bush faulted both Russia and China for their troubled records on democracy. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

30 Taliban fighters drown after boat shot, sunk

SOURCETAG 0706060585
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.06.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 9
BYLINE: AP AND REUTERS
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 239

Afghan forces sank a boat carrying suspected Taliban fighters fleeing an attack and up to 30 drowned, while a separate gunbattle and airstrikes killed an estimated two dozen militants in southern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

The Taliban fighters attacked Afghan and U.S.-led coalition troops with rockets and gunfire Monday in the Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province, sparking a four-hour battle, a coalition statement said. Fighter aircraft bombed three enemy positions, it said.

The statement said "an estimated two dozen enemy fighters" were killed during the battle, but gave no further details on the casualty toll.

Meanwhile, the brother and successor of slain Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah said in a television interview that he received a letter from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden expressing condolences.

BOAT SUNK

The suspected Taliban militants fleeing Afghan and foreign troops drowned in the Helmand River while trying to cross from Sangin to Musa Qala when their boat was shot at and sunk by security forces, said Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi. He said the death toll was between 20 and 30.

"The enemy shot from the boat toward the security forces and the security forces in response shot at the boat. As a result the boat sank," the defence ministry said.

On Friday, a makeshift boat carrying fighters fleeing a battle also sank, killing an estimated 60 Taliban, Azimi said.

A purported Taliban spokesman said the militant group had killed one of five kidnapped Afghan health workers because the government had not yet handed over Dadullah's body by yesterday's deadline.

President Hamid Karzai had ordered the body of Dadullah to be traded for the workers.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

New French prez, Harper a Paris match

SOURCETAG 0706060039

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.06.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 18

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, CP Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife Laureen walk past the French Honour Guard as they arrive in Paris yesterday. The PM met with newly elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy to discuss issues including Afghanistan and the Kyoto accord.

BYLINE: ALEX PANETTA, CP

DATELINE: PARIS

WORD COUNT: 251

On their first political date, a pair of budding allies moved quickly to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

The newly elected president of France took Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a stroll through the streets of Paris to a fancy restaurant where they dined following their first official encounter yesterday.

After meeting a fellow conservative who, like himself, seeks to leave his mark on a traditionally liberal country, Harper called French President Nicolas Sarkozy a great friend of Canada.

NOTHING TO FEAR

The new French government's first act of friendship was to reassure Harper he has nothing to fear from Sarkozy's election promises on Afghanistan and climate change.

The president pledged during the campaign that he would pull French troops out of the war-torn country, and slap an import tax on goods from countries that failed to respect the Kyoto accord.

Both policies could cause trouble for Canada, but Harper sounded optimistic.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," the PM said about the import tax. "What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve ... is enforceable targets under an international protocol."

On Monday, Harper had told an audience in Germany that it's impossible for Canada to meet its goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

NO PULLOUT DEADLINE

As for Afghanistan, Harper said he has no fear that France would suddenly pull out its 1,000 troops stationed there.

"Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent," Harper said. "At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there."

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon confirmed later there are no immediate plans for a pullout, and said Canada would not be the principal target of any eventual import tax. KEYWORDS=WORLD

On the world stage Prime Minister Harper's policies and priorities, particularly in Afghanistan, are changing Canada's international image

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PAGE: 15

ILLUSTRATION: file photo Brig. Gen. Tim Grant shows Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper the area of operation in Ma'Sum Ghar, Kandahar province, Afghanistan during a visit in May.

BYLINE: SHEILA COPPS AND LICIA CORBELLA

COLUMN: Point Counter Point

WORD COUNT: 1574

Is Prime Minister Stephen Harper doing a better job on the international stage for Canada than his Liberal predecessors? After 16 months watching him work, it all depends on who you ask. Sheila Copps, a Sun Media columnist and former federal cabinet minister, is unimpressed. Licia Corbella, editor of the Calgary Sun, is more charitable. Here is their recent exchange of often pointed e-mails.

COPPS: With only 16 months in office Prime Minister Stephen Harper is making waves around the world. But the wrong kind of waves. Canada was always known internationally for our independence. We did not follow George W. Bush to Iraq and, despite some initial business moaning, it looks like Canada made the right choice. But the world is wondering what happened to Canada. Our cultural independence is on the block and so is our international cultural budget. The world is wondering whether Canada has jumped in bed with Bush and they wonder what happened to a proud independent country?

CORBELLA: Thanks Sheila, I actually got a belly laugh reading your e-mail. Coming from someone who sat on the front benches with Prime Minister Jean Chretien, the lover of despots and dictators, it's an almost delusional statement. Like you, however, I was very pleased that Chretien didn't join the war in Iraq. Outside of that, Canada's international reputation plummeted during the 12-year Liberal reign of error. Remember how Chretien allowed Canadian citizens' rights to be trampled during the APEC summit in Vancouver to prevent "any embarrassment" to Indonesia's murderous leader, Suharto? Seeing Chretien mug for the camera with Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe doesn't make it to the top of my most proud Canadian moment list. You say the "world is wondering what happened to Canada." Where's the evidence of that?

COPPS: Actually you are mixing two agendas. Any prime minister should provide a safe welcome for leaders from other countries. Whether in Kananaskis, Halifax or on the campus of the University of British Columbia, good manners count. But it was not the cornerstone of our administration. Every time I turn around Prime Minister Harper is trying to convince an unconvinced country that Afghanistan is forever. His law-and-order agenda at home and abroad is reminiscent of Steve's friend George. I actually thought the PM was smart enough to promote a moderate agenda and be the progressive of his Conservative party. Alas, it was not to be and that is why he is perpetually stuck in minority territory.

CORBELLA: Who knew "good manners" includes pepper spraying peacefully protesting citizens to protect the murderous ego of Suharto from "any embarrassment"? The protesters had "good manners"; your government didn't. Don't recall you being outraged about that violation of human rights, Sheila. As for

Afghanistan, just because Canadians aren't convinced of the mission's merits doesn't mean it doesn't have any. It was the Liberals who committed us to Afghanistan and thanks to Liberal PM Paul Martin's infamous inability to make a decision, when it came time to decide what second mission our troops would take on he dithered so long, we got stuck with the heavy lifting in volatile Kandahar. Also, 2009 is hardly forever.

COPPS: Actually, when we committed to Afghanistan it was for a fixed rotation. The idea is to give sufficient notice so that another country or group of countries can step in where we left off. When the prime minister hinted at extending the mission beyond 2009 he is obviously gambling that it would be a good election issue. He is also ignoring a Parliament approved deadline. Why would any ally want to step into that hornet's nest when Canada's commitment is unlimited? To me that sounds a lot like forever. Take heed of the views from Afghanistan's neighbours and other allies in the war on terror. Pakistan is suggesting we actually talk to the Taliban.

CORBELLA: Having been to Afghanistan I know the vast majority of the people there — especially the women — want us there. More than seven million girls are now going to school thanks largely to our efforts. The people have hope again. As for Canada's independence, Canada led the way for the rest of the world after Hamas was elected by the Palestinian people to form government. Harper declared that while Canada would still fund humanitarian work there, it would no longer put Canadian dollars directly into government hands because Hamas vows to destroy Israel. The rest of the world followed Harper's lead, not the other way around. That includes Bush. While Chretien and Martin kissed up to China, the Conservatives refuse to play by their rules. China is now trying to tell Canada to stop sending government officials to Taiwan. The Conservative government is telling China it will go wherever it pleases. Sounds like independence to me.

COPPS: You have conveniently forgotten the original point about a never-ending commitment. There are many places around the world that would love to have Canada's help. Does Darfur come to mind? But obviously if we refuse to seek a non-military solution and we provide an open commitment past 2009 there is no incentive for anyone else to help. As for leadership, the prime minister sees the world in black and white while in reality it is far more nuanced. The rules for democracy are very different in many countries beyond our borders. Are we to defend them all. And where are our allies?

CORBELLA: Actually, the "original point" was, and I quote you: "the world is wondering... what happened to a proud independent country?" You conveniently forgot to answer what your proof is of that still unsubstantiated claim. Also, now you ask where are our allies? Huh? In the same base where our soldiers are stationed in Kandahar, they are joined by British, Dutch, Italian, American, Spanish and other allied soldiers, all UN sanctioned and NATO run. As for a never-ending commitment, as Liberal Senator Colin Kenny points out, imagine what would have happened in the Second World War had Britain and Canada said, "we'll fight until 1941 and then we'll let our allies come in." We'd all be speaking German right now and our flag would have a swastika on it instead of a maple leaf.

COPPS: The war on terror is a very different matter than the Nazi occupation. In a sense we are the referees in a civil war very similar to the role we could play in Darfur or other world trouble spots. If neighbouring Pakistan sees a benefit in talking to the Taliban we have to heed their advice. They are allies who know Afghanistan better than anyone. As for Hamas, any person viewing Israeli foreign policy has deemed the Israeli incursion into Lebanon an utter failure. The most disappointed are Israeli citizens looking for peace. While Hezbollah and Hamas build their constituency, our foreign policy is certainly not leading in a positive direction. You keep asking where is my proof? Spend a few days hanging around the United Nations, Brussels or the OECD and you should hear the scuttlebutt that our reputation as an agent for peace is a footnote in history. I guess the ultimate proof will come in the next election. Harper is gambling that people will see this as a repeat of the Second World War. The new millennium brought a new type of terror and conventional warriors won't win.

CORBELLA: Pakistan sees a benefit in talking to the Taliban because the Taliban were schooled in and

funded by Pakistan. Indeed, many Taliban are Pakistanis. Surely, you know that? What's more, 99% of Afghans hate the Taliban with a passion. I hope you know that, too. We do not "have to" take our marching orders from Pakistan, Sheila. I'm frankly shocked that someone urging us to be more independent would suggest we do so. I realize the Liberals love Hamas and never wanted to declare it a terrorist organization, but the Conservatives tend to call a spade a spade. The rest of the world followed, including France and other countries practiced in the art of appeasement and sophistry. Canada is way more independent now than under the Liberals. Canada has re-established our sovereignty in the north — over the objections of the U.S., Norway, Finland and others. What's more, PM Paul Martin, was so afraid of Bush it took him 64 days just to build up enough courage to telephone the President after a NAFTA ruling in favour of Canada on softwood lumber tariffs. By then another ruling had come down that favoured the U.S. and Martin's dithering cost Canada valuable ground on the file. By contrast, it took Harper just about two weeks longer to hammer out a resolution to the dispute. That's leadership and independence.

Speak out for what's right

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PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.06.06
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SECTION: Viewpoints
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SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 741

With five simple words, a military judge on Monday not only threw a monkey wrench into the American system of trying combatants in the war on terror, he also gave Canadians an entry to a debate from which this country has been sadly absent.

The U.S. government has held a Canadian prisoner for almost five years in the infamous facility it established in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for extra-territorial incarceration and interrogation of people arrested since the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

To be sure, Omar Khadr is far from a sympathetic figure. The son of one of Canada's most notorious families, Khadr was captured on July 27, 2002, after a grenade he tossed in Afghanistan claimed the life of U.S. medic Chris Speer.

Although former prime minister Jean Chretien insisted at the time that the young Khadr (then 15) ought to be treated like any other citizen arrested abroad and be seen by Canadian officials, there was little public backlash when U.S. officials insisted they alone would determine the fate of "enemy combatants" held at Guantanamo.

No doubt the cool reaction from Canadian officials and politicians stem from the very public con-job the Khadr's perpetrated on their adopted country in 1996.

Chretien went to bat for Khadr's father, Ahmed Saeed Khadr, who had been accused of helping to finance a bombing attack on the Egyptian embassy that killed 16 people and wounded dozens of others. Within days of the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, however, it became clear the patriarch not only was a terrorist, but one of Osama bin Laden's top lieutenants.

Subsequent interviews with family members made it clear that many of its many members were unrepentant and proud when the father was killed and two sons were captured fighting against those trying to bring law and order to Afghanistan. Abdul Rahman Khadr, who was 19 when captured, has since been released from Guantanamo while Omar was charged with murder.

It is worth remembering that the Khadr's disgusting philosophy received wide publicity at a time when Canada was on the defensive. In part that was because of an attempt by a naturalized Canadian to blow up Los Angeles' international airport at the turn of the millennium and in part because of erroneous news stories that said the 9/11 attackers had entered the U.S. through Canada.

While it is easy to see why Canadian politicians and officials don't want to touch the Khadr case with a barge pole, their silence has been seen by some as an unconscionable endorsement of an increasingly suspect U.S. policy.

This is particularly the case considering the very public complaints that have come from Canadian officials — including the prime minister — about China's treatment of terrorist suspect Huseyin Celil, a Canadian–Chinese citizen arrested while he was travelling in Asia on a Canadian passport.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was right to take China to task over the Celil case. But he should have been just as forceful with the American government on Khadr.

Monday's decision throws into question the case of every accused held in Cuba, because the judge's ruling is based upon the presumption that military tribunals only can deal with criminal enemy combatants — a designation that hasn't been applied to any of the current detainees. Many advocates point to Khadr's young age when he was arrested. From the time he was barely 10, he was forced to train to be a warrior.

Ironically, on the day the military judge threw out the charges against Khadr, former Liberian president Charles Taylor, one of history's most infamous abusers of child soldiers, was called before an international criminal court to face charges. That the U.S. treats child soldiers as it does any other combatant puts into greater question the American commitment to human rights — something that's making Washington lawmakers squirm.

But civilized countries — a club that should include both Canada and the U.S. — tailor their criminal justice systems to take into account the reduced capacity and greater potential for redemption of their youngest members. Canada has a duty to push for that kind of protection for Khadr, even though five years have been squandered while he sat mostly in isolation and without education at Guantanamo.

It is time for Canadian politicians and officials to break their silence and speak for what is right, even if it isn't on behalf of the most sympathetic character.

– This editorial was originally published in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix.

Two-year-old UN anti-drug trust fund has yet to be used

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BYLINE: Steven Edwards
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 641

UNITED NATIONS — Back in February, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced to great fanfare that his government would substantially increase its funding for Afghan reconstruction and development. A big portion of that new money, Harper said, was earmarked for anti-drug programs including a fund to be spent by the Afghan government.

It now emerges the Afghan bureaucracy is so cumbersome that almost \$42.3 million US that Canada and other donors have given to the so-called Counter Narcotics Trust Fund since its 2005 launch is languishing in bank accounts, unused.

Britain, the chief donor to the fund, is so alarmed that it has "turned off the (money) tap."

Critics say the idle fund is particularly scandalous given Canadian and other NATO troops are locked in a daily struggle to make the country safe for reconstruction.

Since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, 56 Canadian soldiers and a Canadian diplomat have been killed. Almost 500 other soldiers of the international forces have also died.

Canadian officials were are more guarded about whether Canada has also stopped putting money into the fund.

"The Trust Fund is relatively new and operates in a challenging environment," said a Foreign Affairs spokesperson, while acknowledging the fund is not working properly. The department did not respond to questions on the exact status of \$3 million Harper pledged in February out of \$200 million for other anti-drug, reconstruction and development programs.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) confirmed it has already delivered \$1.2 million to the fund, which is one of the Afghan government's flagship reconstruction programs to combat drug production partly by giving Afghans other means to earn a living.

"Our appeal to donors is to trust the trust fund," said Afghan Counter Narcotics Minister Habibullah Qaderi at the fund's launch.

Since then, deposits and pledges total \$74.5 million US, according to figures supplied Tuesday by the United Nations Development Program.

While a management board including Afghan, UN and donor officials has approved more than \$27 million US in projects, the Afghan government has spent only about \$1 million US.

"It's basically an administrative mess," said one international source. "There is something inherently wrong with the entire program, from the complicated application process, to confusion over what projects are eligible, to the sheer impossibility of working out who's actually doing the approving and the rejecting."

"I have not seen any impact of the significant financial contributions to that trust fund on the ground in Helmand or Kandahar, which is where I work," said Norine MacDonald, a leading Afghanistan researcher with the Senlis Council, a think tank that has been scathingly critical of CIDA's aid record in the country.

She said poppy cultivation is up in those provinces.

"I think there are a lot of indicators that there is a lot of private dissatisfaction with how counter-narcotics policy is going in Afghanistan," she added.

Britain says it still has faith in the fund, but can't justify adding to it as long as the Afghan government is unable to absorb the cash.

"It's not about a continuous tap," said one British official. "It's rather, you turn on the tap and give a certain amount, and when the bucket's full, you turn off the tap. When the bucket is a bit emptier, you can add more."

Other donors include the European Commission, Australia, Japan, Poland and Sweden.

"There are plenty of other places where this stagnant money could be used," said an Australian diplomat. But officials stressed there is no concern that the money might be swallowed by corruption or misdirected.

"The general mood among donors is that they want to understand why there are bottlenecks before they add more money," another researcher said.

Afghanistan's health and rural redevelopment ministries have the best reputations for efficiency, but officials say even they can't cope with the complicated legal procedures entailed in the fund process. The Counter Narcotics Ministry is overall coordinator, but its "capacity" is said to be extremely limited.

UNDP said the \$3 million Harper announced in February has yet to be delivered. A government of Canada website entry says it will "help build Afghanistan's counter-narcotics institutions."

The United States initially shunned the fund, but recently gave \$8 million US to a new initiative that rewards poppy-free provinces.

Noting this, the UNDP official said: "We are not aware of donor governments halting contributions."

Is PM killing our rep? Are Stephen Harper's international policies and priorities changing Canada's image -- and is it for good or bad?

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PAGE: A9
BYLINE: SHEILA COPPS AND LICIA CORBELLA, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 1528

Is Prime Minister Stephen Harper doing a better job on the international stage for Canada than his Liberal predecessors? It all depends on who you ask. Former deputy PM Sheila Copps is unimpressed. Licia Corbella, editor of the Calgary Sun, is more charitable. Here is their exchange of often pointed e-mails.

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CORBELLA: Thanks Sheila, I actually got a belly laugh reading your e-mail. Coming from someone who sat on the front benches with Prime Minister Jean Chretien, the lover of despots and dictators, it's an almost delusional statement. Like you, however, I was very pleased Chretien didn't join the war in Iraq. Outside of that, Canada's international reputation plummeted during the 12-year Liberal reign of error. Remember how Chretien allowed Canadian citizens' rights to be trampled during the APEC summit in Vancouver to prevent "any embarrassment" to Indonesia's murderous leader, Suharto? Seeing Chretien mug for the camera with Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe doesn't make it to the top of my most proud Canadian moments list. You say the "world is wondering what happened to Canada." Where's the evidence?

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Harper, Sarkozy establish rapport Canada's prime minister and France's president, both conservatives, discuss Afghanistan, Kyoto.

SOURCETAG 0706060439

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.06.06

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, CP OFFICIAL WELCOME: Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife Laureen walk past a French honour guard after they arrived in Paris yesterday. Harper and France's new president, Nicolas Sarkozy, seemed to have a cordial first meeting.

BYLINE: ALEX PANETTA, CP

DATELINE: PARIS

WORD COUNT: 334

On their first political date, a pair of budding allies moved quickly to smooth over two potential threats to their relationship: Afghanistan and climate change.

The newly elected president of France took Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a stroll through the streets of Paris to a fancy restaurant where they dined following their first official encounter yesterday.

After meeting a fellow conservative who, like himself, seeks to leave his mark on a traditionally liberal country, Harper called French President Nicolas Sarkozy a great friend of Canada.

The new French government's first act of friendship was to reassure Harper that he has nothing to fear from Sarkozy's election promises on Afghanistan and climate change.

The youthful-looking president pledged during the campaign that he would pull French troops out of the war-torn country, and slap an import tax on goods from countries that failed to respect the Kyoto accord.

Both policies could cause trouble for Canada. But Harper left Paris expressing assuagement.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," Harper said about the import tax.

"What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve . . . is enforceable targets under an international protocol."

On Monday, Harper told an audience in Germany that it's impossible for Canada to meet its goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

As for Afghanistan, Harper said he has no fear that France would suddenly pull out the 1,000 French troops stationed there as part of the international coalition.

"Like Canada, he obviously doesn't view his presence in Afghanistan as permanent," Harper said.

"At the same time, he's committed to work with our allies and committed to success there. He indicated to me no particular timetable to leave. So I think we're on the same page on both those matters."

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon confirmed later at a news conference there are no immediate plans for a pullout, and said Canada would not be the principal target of any eventual import tax.

Visiting Paris between meetings in Germany with leaders of the European Union and the Group of Eight, Harper spent the entire day in Paris and also met with Fillon.

But it was the encounter with the president that will go down as one of the more memorable bilateral experiences of Harper's 16-month-old prime ministership.

Sarkozy dispensed with diplomatic formalities and gave Harper a good-natured pat on the back when he arrived at the Elysee presidential palace.

By the end of the encounter he was referring to Harper by the friendly French pronoun, "tu," instead of the more formal, "vous." KEYWORDS=WORLD

Anti-al-Qaida elders targeted

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PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.06.06
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ILLUSTRATION: photo by AP BOMBING CAMPAIGN SOARS: U.S. Navy sailor Brittany Hodgson greets a colleague yesterday near a stack of missiles on the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz in the Persian Gulf. Air strikes in support of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan are among duties of aircraft taking off from the Nimitz and the USS John C. Stennis. Four years into the war that opened with "shock and awe," U.S. warplanes have again stepped up attacks in Iraq, dropping bombs at more than twice the rate of a year ago. The airpower escalation parallels a nearly four-month-old security crackdown that is bringing 30,000 additional U.S. troops into Baghdad and its surrounding areas.

BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: BAGHDAD
WORD COUNT: 279

A suicide car bomber struck a group of tribal chiefs who opposed al-Qaida, killing at least 18 in a market area near Fallujah. Yesterday's attack underscored the difficulties facing Sunni leaders in trying to wrest control of Anbar province from the terror network.

Much of the al-Buissa tribe has formed an alliance against "al-Qaida in Iraq" which has alienated more moderate Sunnis with its brutality and dependence on foreign fighters. The U.S. military has touted the alliance, the Anbar Salvation Council, as a success in its efforts to stabilize the country.

The bomb exploded in a pickup truck next to where the elders were trying to solve a tribal dispute in Amiriyah, 65 kilometres west of Baghdad, police said. The driver of the pickup gained access to the market area by saying he needed to buy some watermelons, said Ahmed al-Issawi, a food store owner.

"We told him not to stay long in the market," al-Issawi said, adding the driver did stop to buy some watermelons. "Then, he drove very fast toward the sheiks and exploded the pickup."

Al-Issawi said he and other shop owners tried to extinguish some burning bodies.

At least 18 people were killed and 15 were wounded.

As the mourners later buried the dead in the cemetery of the town on the outskirts of Fallujah, four mortar shells landed in the cemetery, police said. No casualties were reported in that attack.

An al-Buissa tribal chieftain, Abbas Mohammed, said the violence would not deter the local leaders from their fight against al-Qaida.

"We expected such attacks after we cleaned our area of al-Qaida members," Mohammed said. "Despite these attacks, we will go on in chasing al-Qaida elements."

Meanwhile, alert guards foiled a suicide attack in eastern Baghdad, gunning down a black-clad female

bomber as she approached a group of police recruits, and causing her explosives to detonate, according to Interior Ministry spokesperson Abdul-Karim Khalaf.

"She didn't obey the guards' orders to stop and they shot her and she immediately blew up," Khalaf said.
KEYWORDS=WORLD

30 Taliban fighters drown after boat shot, sunk

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DATE: 2007.06.06
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BYLINE: AP AND REUTERS
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 239

Afghan forces sank a boat carrying suspected Taliban fighters fleeing an attack and up to 30 drowned, while a separate gunbattle and airstrikes killed an estimated two dozen militants in southern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

The Taliban fighters attacked Afghan and U.S.-led coalition troops with rockets and gunfire Monday in the Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province, sparking a four-hour battle, a coalition statement said. Fighter aircraft bombed three enemy positions, it said.

The statement said "an estimated two dozen enemy fighters" were killed during the battle, but gave no further details on the casualty toll.

Meanwhile, the brother and successor of slain Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah said in a television interview that he received a letter from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden expressing condolences.

BOAT SUNK

The suspected Taliban militants fleeing Afghan and foreign troops drowned in the Helmand River while trying to cross from Sangin to Musa Qala when their boat was shot at and sunk by security forces, said Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi. He said the death toll was between 20 and 30.

"The enemy shot from the boat toward the security forces and the security forces in response shot at the boat. As a result the boat sank," the defence ministry said.

On Friday, a makeshift boat carrying fighters fleeing a battle also sank, killing an estimated 60 Taliban, Azimi said.

A purported Taliban spokesman said the militant group had killed one of five kidnapped Afghan health workers because the government had not yet handed over Dadullah's body by yesterday's deadline.

President Hamid Karzai had ordered the body of Dadullah to be traded for the workers.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

On the world stage Prime Minister Harper's policies and priorities, particularly in Afghanistan, are changing Canada's international image

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DATE: 2007.06.06

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SECTION: Editorial/Opinion

PAGE: 11

ILLUSTRATION: file photo Brig. Gen. Tim Grant shows Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper the area of operation in Ma'Sum Ghar, Kandahar province, Afghanistan during a visit in May.

BYLINE: SHEILA COPPS AND LICIA CORBELLA

COLUMN: Point Counterpoint

WORD COUNT: 1574

Is Prime Minister Stephen Harper doing a better job on the international stage for Canada than his Liberal predecessors? After 16 months watching him work, it all depends on who you ask. Sheila Copps, a Sun Media columnist and former federal cabinet minister, is unimpressed. Licia Corbella, editor of the Calgary Sun, is more charitable. Here is their recent exchange of often pointed e-mails.

COPPS: With only 16 months in office Prime Minister Stephen Harper is making waves around the world. But the wrong kind of waves. Canada was always known internationally for our independence. We did not follow George W. Bush to Iraq and, despite some initial business moaning, it looks like Canada made the right choice. But the world is wondering what happened to Canada. Our cultural independence is on the block and so is our international cultural budget. The world is wondering whether Canada has jumped in bed with Bush and they wonder what happened to a proud independent country?

CORBELLA: Thanks Sheila, I actually got a belly laugh reading your e-mail. Coming from someone who sat on the front benches with Prime Minister Jean Chretien, the lover of despots and dictators, it's an almost delusional statement. Like you, however, I was very pleased that Chretien didn't join the war in Iraq. Outside of that, Canada's international reputation plummeted during the 12-year Liberal reign of error. Remember how Chretien allowed Canadian citizens' rights to be trampled during the APEC summit in Vancouver to prevent "any embarrassment" to Indonesia's murderous leader, Suharto? Seeing Chretien mug for the camera with Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe doesn't make it to the top of my most proud Canadian moment list. You say the "world is wondering what happened to Canada." Where's the evidence of that?

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CORBELLA: Who knew "good manners" includes pepper spraying peacefully protesting citizens to protect the murderous ego of Suharto from "any embarrassment"? The protesters had "good manners"; your government didn't. Don't recall you being outraged about that violation of human rights, Sheila. As for

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CORBELLA: Having been to Afghanistan I know the vast majority of the people there — especially the women — want us there. More than seven million girls are now going to school thanks largely to our efforts. The people have hope again. As for Canada's independence, Canada led the way for the rest of the world after Hamas was elected by the Palestinian people to form government. Harper declared that while Canada would still fund humanitarian work there, it would no longer put Canadian dollars directly into government hands because Hamas vows to destroy Israel. The rest of the world followed Harper's lead, not the other way around. That includes Bush. While Chretien and Martin kissed up to China, the Conservatives refuse to play by their rules. China is now trying to tell Canada to stop sending government officials to Taiwan. The Conservative government is telling China it will go wherever it pleases. Sounds like independence to me.

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Harper unworried by France

SOURCETAG 0706060719
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.06.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 29
ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHEN HARPER No worries
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: PARIS
WORD COUNT: 127

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said yesterday he's not worried about a pair of promises made by the new government of France that could negatively affect Canada.

Visiting Paris between meetings in Germany with leaders of the European Union and the Group of Eight, Harper said he had an amicable meeting with Nicolas Sarkozy, the new president of France, at the Elysee Palace.

Harper said he has no concerns about two of the promises the French president made -- a pullout of French troops from Afghanistan, and an import tax on countries that don't respect the Kyoto accord.

"This is not a policy aimed at Canada," Harper said about Sarkozy's proposed import tax. "What France is trying to achieve and what Canada is also trying to achieve ... is enforceable targets under an international protocol." KEYWORDS=WORLD

On the world stage Prime Minister Harper's policies and priorities, particularly in Afghanistan, are changing Canada's international image

SOURCETAG 0706060708

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.06.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Editorial/Opinion

PAGE: 15

ILLUSTRATION: file photo Brig. Gen. Tim Grant shows Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper the area of operation in Ma'Sum Ghar, Kandahar province, Afghanistan during a visit in May.

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U.S. unswayed by Khadr ruling

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PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.06.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
DATELINE: GUANTANAMO BAY US NAVAL BASE, Cuba
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 313

GUANTANAMO BAY US NAVAL BASE, Cuba (AFP) — The U.S. government yesterday defended its effort to try Guantanamo Bay "war on terror" detainees by military commission despite judges throwing out two early cases.

"We don't agree with the ruling," White House spokesman Tony Fratto told reporters after Monday's surprise rulings at the U.S. naval base in southern Cuba.

"The system is taking great care to be within the letter of the law," he added in Prague, where President George W. Bush kicked off a European tour.

His comments came after cases against Toronto native Omar Ahmed Khadr, 20, and Osama bin Laden's ex-driver Salim Ahmed Hamdan were thrown out by two judges. In both cases, the judges found they had no jurisdiction to proceed with military-commission trials, as neither Khadr nor Hamdan had been classified as an "unlawful enemy combatant" as required by a recent U.S. law.

But Fratto maintained that "in no way do those decisions affect the appropriateness of the military commission system," adding the Defense Department had asked for time to study the rulings to consider an appeal.

So far only three people have faced hearings at Guantanamo Bay since the Military Commissions Act was rushed through Congress in September, after the U.S. government's old procedure was overturned by the Supreme Court.

The only Guantanamo trial to proceed was that of 31-year-old "Australian Taliban" David Hicks, jailed for nine months in March under a plea-bargain deal. He is now imprisoned in Adelaide.

Monday's ruling was seized on by rights groups, who have long argued that the U.S. is violating international law by holding hundreds of suspects rounded up in the "war on terror" without charge and without access to visitors.

The ruling triggered calls for the release of Khadr, who was just 15 when captured in Afghanistan and accused of killing a U.S. army medic in a hand-grenade attack. But lawyers said both Khadr and Hamdan will remain in legal limbo here along with nearly 400 other detainees.

Time to intervene

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DATE: 2007.06.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A16
KEYWORDS: CANADIANS; PRISONERS OF WAR; INTERNATIONAL LAW; TERRORISM
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 395

For the past five years, the federal government has maintained a firm distance from Omar Khadr, the Canadian thrown into the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay and accused of killing a U.S. medic in the Afghanistan campaign.

But hands-off is no longer an acceptable policy. An American military judge this week threw out the charges against Khadr at a military tribunal, sending him again into legal limbo.

Remembering that he is a citizen of this country — however outside the norm of Canadian values he may be — the Harper government should now begin negotiations to bring him back to Canada.

His repugnant al-Qaida connections and violent

Islamist views do not diminish Ottawa's obligation to try and secure for him some basic legal rights so far denied him in Guantanamo. Without any intervention, Khadr could be kept indefinitely in the U.S. jail, though he's been convicted of nothing, and still hasn't had a fair hearing.

Moreover, Khadr was only 15 when he was apprehended for allegedly throwing a grenade at U.S. forces, and his youth at the time of the incident should be a mitigating factor. No other juvenile has been tried for war crimes in modern conflicts, says his American lawyer.

Khadr's Edmonton lawyer Dennis Edney says the U.S. has been "making up the rules" with the military tribunals set up after 2001 to handle Guantanamo detainees outside the normal legal system. "The military commission is an experiment that failed and we don't need any more evidence."

Khadr's charges were dismissed on a technicality. The U.S. Congress gave the commission jurisdiction over "unlawful enemy combatants" in 2006. But Khadr and 379 other prisoners are designated only as enemy combatants. It may be just confusion of definitions. Or perhaps the rulings raise the larger question about whether any person fighting against an invading army can be charged with murder.

Legal issues aside though, it's time to move ahead. Both Britain and Australia have negotiated deals with the U.S. to get their citizens out of Guantanamo and back home. Canada must now do the same.

In a country that respects the rule of law, Khadr deserves fair treatment. If he is a danger to Canada and other countries, that must be determined in independent hearings. As Edney put it: "If there are grounds to try him, we have courts in Canada — courts where defendants can be arraigned and where appeals can be heard by judges."

Soldiering on; D-Day and Afghanistan veterans share a common bond

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PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.06.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Local
PAGE: A8
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: John Rennison, the Hamilton Spectator / Afghanistanveteran Phil Howie, left, and D-Day veteran Garth Webb. ;
BYLINE: John Burman
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 399

The years between their wars encompass three generations.

The weapons, tactics and threats in Afghanistan are different. Soldiers are paid far better than they were in the Second World War.

But Garth Webb, 88, of Burlington, who landed on Juno Beach in Normandy a lieutenant with the 14th Field Regiment (Royal Canadian Artillery) on D-Day 63 years ago today, says he and Phil Howie, a Royal Hamilton Light Infantry veteran who saw action in Afghanistan this spring, have quite a lot in common.

"In the atmosphere of battle, when you're in action, things are not all that different," Webb said yesterday, shortly before meeting Corporal Howie, 27.

"There's the constant danger and everyone knows people are going to get killed, that things may happen, but you don't plan on it being you. You keep moving. That's the same."

Howie agrees. When a rocket-propelled grenade narrowly missed his G-Wagon as they escorted a convoy in Afghanistan one night, Howie and Sergeant Ian MacDonald just looked at each other and kept moving.

"The experiences are similar because you're always going to be a soldier, no matter what the situation you're in," says Howie adding he considered it "a privilege" to meet Webb who spearheaded the fundraising for the Juno Beach Centre in Courselles-sur-Mer, which honours the Canadian contribution to D-Day and the war to liberate Europe.

"They had a tougher time," says Howie.

"I have great respect for those guys. Now I understand, through my experiences and what I have gone through, that when there's action you just soldier on -- you just keep going."

D-Day marked the beginning of the war to liberate Western Europe from Nazi tyranny. The liberation of Afghanistan from Taliban control has already been fought. The mission for Canadian soldiers now is to maintain stability so reconstruction can continue.

Where Canadian soldiers landing in Normandy had clear objectives, territory to take from a tenacious enemy and keep and then move forward, Afghanistan is what one officer calls "a 360-degree war with no front as such," where troops operate from fixed or forward bases and return to them.

Today's soldiers are rotated out of Afghanistan after a six-month tour. In the Second World War they signed on for the duration and spent years at war, says Webb who will explain D-Day to students at Oakville Trafalgar High School today.

Both soldiers note the troops in both wars were volunteers. Thousands of Canadians signed up well before D-Day and recruitment is rising in Canada now, even as casualties in Afghanistan mount -- 56 killed so far.

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Our navy sailing into oblivion

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EDITION: Final
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PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Colin Kenny
SOURCE: Special to The Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 921

At the end of the Second World War, it was almost impossible to find a Canadian who didn't understand the importance of Canada's navy. Six decades later, it is difficult to find a Canadian who does.

The ships go out. The ships come back. What was that all about? No guns or torpedoes were fired, so what were they doing out there? And those ships are expensive. They're always getting refitted. Who needs them?

We do, and we're going to for a long time. Which is becoming a real problem, because right now the politicians who control Canada's purse strings are neglecting our navy. That could cause big problems for Canadians in the coming decades. They should know why.

Right now, most Canadians assume that someone in Ottawa is taking care of all this on their behalf. Wrong.

In Part 2 of this series I will take a more detailed look at those components of our navy that are getting short shrift — think frigates, think destroyers, think submarines, think having to steal equipment from other ships to go to sea.

In Part 1, I would like to focus on what roles our navy plays on behalf of Canadians, and ponder why the navy isn't getting much attention from the Canadian government these days.

What kind of country needs a strong navy?

How about a country with the longest coastline in the world? That would be Canada.

How about a country whose economy is largely built around exports, a high percentage of which are shipped by sea — even to the United States? That would be Canada.

How about a country that is big enough to play a significant role in world politics, but not big enough to do that unless it makes major contributions to its alliances (such as NATO naval exercises and missions)? That would be Canada.

ACT IN CONCERT

Navies can protect coastlines and littoral waters. Navies can act in concert with like-minded countries to protect shipping lanes threatened by pirates or hostile states. Navies can blockade renegade states.

Well-equipped navies can transport troops and military equipment over long distances — in land operations, the economies of transporting by ship are often far superior to flying in troops and equipment.

Navies often offer the best means of projecting power against a hostile country — simply the presence of an aircraft carrier surrounded by support vessels and loaded with fighter planes can convince a hostile country to modify its behaviour. Canada doesn't have an aircraft carrier, but it has frigates and destroyers that have often helped protect allies' aircraft carriers.

A useful navy is an entry ticket to alliances that help us defend our interests. We can't expect our allies to defend us on their own. Example: for many years Canada had virtually no submarine presence on our Pacific coast. Because of that, U.S. subs that have been active along that coastline saw no need to share underwater intelligence with us.

Navies are increasingly joining hands to act in common interest, both for diplomatic and constabulary reasons. Canada will never have a big enough navy to dominate any part of the high seas, but it should be capable of joining a common front against hostile forces — both defending Canada's interests and making friends by acting in common cause.

The navies of many Asian countries are growing, and some are working together to combat piracy after having joined hands to assist with relief during the 2004 tsunami.

Canada is a Pacific country. Countries such as China and India continue to pour vast sums into defence and to flex their economic, political and military muscles.

Canada's trade with this region is increasing rapidly. It has been estimated that the North American West Coast is going to have to increase port capacity by the equivalent of the capacity of the Port of Vancouver every year to handle massive increases in container shipping.

Canadians have an interest in how things shake down in Asia. Countries such as China and India understand that political strength and economic strength related to shipping requires a strong naval presence. Their navies are waxing. Canada's is waning.

STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL

Consider: Announcements of new military spending last summer designated money for trucks (army), helicopters (army), both strategic and tactical transport planes (for transporting army personnel and equipment) and replenishment ships (for refuelling the navy, but also for transporting supplies for the army). Then there was one more purchase announced a few weeks ago — tanks for the army.

Yes, we have a commitment in Afghanistan, a landlocked nation. The most urgent purchases are for the army. But this government promised to grow and rehabilitate the entire Canadian Forces after previous governments allowed them to decay.

So far, any rehabilitation has been almost completely army-centric. The defence capability plan the government ordered the Department of National Defence to produce last fall seems to have disappeared. It was supposed to outline our military's most glaring needs — some of which would have focused on the navy and air force — so the government could make spending plans.

Will it reappear before the next election? Or does the government believe it has bought off voters who believe Canada should be capable of defending itself with its announcement of army-oriented purchases, and doesn't want to alienate pacifist voters by telling the truth: that it will need to invest billions more in both the army and the other branches if Canada is going to have a viable military a decade or two from now?

Meanwhile, there appears to be no plan for refitting frigates that need refitting, and replacing destroyers that need replacing.

If the government is going to use its current commitment in Afghanistan to renege on its commitment to rebuild the entire military, the Canadian navy isn't going to be able to defend a bathtub 20 years from now.

Colin Kenny is chairman of the Senate national security and defence committee. Part 2 will appear tomorrow.

Afghan anti–drug fund languishes in bank account; The chief donor to the fund, Britain, is so alarmed by the lack of progress that it has 'turned off the tap,' writes Steven Edwards at the United Nations.

IDNUMBER 200706060168

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.06.06

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Ahmad Masood, Reuters / Men destroy opium poppies during an eradication campaign in the eastern province of Ningarhar earlier this year. Norine MacDonald, a leading Afghanistan researcher with the Senlis Council, an international policy think–tank, says 'there is a lot of private dissatisfaction with how counter–narcotic policy is going in Afghanistan.' ;

BYLINE: Steven Edwards

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 507

Back in February, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced to great fanfare that his government would substantially increase its funding for Afghan reconstruction and development. A big portion of that new money, Mr. Harper said, was earmarked for anti–drug programs, including a fund to be spent by the Afghan government.

It now emerges the Afghan bureaucracy is so cumbersome that almost \$42.3 million U.S. that Canada and other donors have given to the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund since its 2005 launch is languishing in bank accounts, unused.

Britain, the chief donor to the fund, is so alarmed that it has "turned off the (money) tap."

Critics say the idle fund is particularly scandalous given Canadian and other NATO troops are locked in a daily struggle to make the country safe for reconstruction.

Since the 2001 U.S.–led invasion of Afghanistan, 56 Canadian soldiers and a Canadian diplomat have been killed. Almost 500 other soldiers of the international forces have also died.

Canadian officials were more guarded about whether Canada has also stopped putting money into the fund.

"The trust fund is relatively new and operates in a challenging environment," said a Foreign Affairs spokesperson, while acknowledging the fund is not working properly. The department did not respond to questions on the exact status of \$3 million Mr. Harper pledged in February out of \$200 million for other anti–drug, reconstruction and development programs.

The Canadian International Development Agency confirmed it has already delivered \$1.2 million to the fund, which is one of the Afghan government's flagship reconstruction programs to combat drug production partly by giving Afghans other means to earn a living.

Afghan anti–drug fund languishes in bank account; The chief donor to the fund, Britain, is so alarmed by the

"Our appeal to donors is to trust the trust fund," said Afghan Counter Narcotics Minister Habibullah Qaderi at the fund's launch.

Since then, deposits and pledges total \$74.5 million U.S., according to figures supplied yesterday by the United Nations Development Program.

While a management board including Afghan, UN and donor officials has approved more than \$27 million U.S. in projects, the Afghan government has spent only about \$1 million U.S.

"It's basically an administrative mess," said one international source. "There is something inherently wrong with the entire program, from the complicated application process, to confusion over what projects are eligible, to the sheer impossibility of working out who's actually doing the approving and the rejecting."

"I have not seen any impact of the significant financial contributions to that trust fund on the ground in Helmand or Kandahar, which is where I work," said Norine MacDonald, a leading Afghanistan researcher with the Senlis Council, a think-tank that has been scathingly critical of CIDA's aid record in the country.

She said poppy cultivation is up in those provinces.

"I think there are a lot of indicators that there is a lot of private dissatisfaction with how counter-narcotics policy is going in Afghanistan," she added.

Britain says it still has faith in the fund, but can't justify adding to it as long as the Afghan government is unable to absorb the cash.

"It's not about a continuous tap," said one British official. "It's rather, you turn on the tap and give a certain amount, and when the bucket's full, you turn off the tap. When the bucket is a bit emptier, you can add more."

Other donors include the European Commission, Australia, Japan, Poland and Sweden.

"There are plenty of other places where this stagnant money could be used," said an Australian diplomat.

Harper can't match laid back French leader; Nicolas Sarkozy has succeeded by cultivating a populist persona, writes Andrew Mayeda in Paris. Though like-minded, our PM has a different style.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Benoit Tessier, Reuters / Nicolas Sarkozy and Stephen Harper leave the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday on their way to a restaurant built in the time of Louis XV. ;

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 443

They are both right-wing leaders who believe in free markets and warm relations with the United States. But in their first face-to-face meeting yesterday, the differences in style between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and French President Nicolas Sarkozy could not have been more striking.

Mr. Sarkozy is clearly basking in his election triumph last month. He has acted boldly, sprinkling his cabinet with Socialists and women in a bid to soften his hawkish image, and proposing to rework the European constitution.

In welcoming the Canadian leader, Mr. Sarkozy looked like a man still on the campaign trail. Flanked by blue-uniformed soldiers in red-feathered caps, Mr. Sarkozy watched from the top of the steps to the Elysee Palace as Mr. Harper pulled into the courtyard in a blue limousine adorned with a Canadian flag.

It was a display of pomp and ceremony rarely seen in Ottawa.

A tanned Mr. Sarkozy then showed his populist touch, an image he is clearly trying to cultivate. After mere minutes inside the palace, Mr. Sarkozy led Mr. Harper on a stroll down the streets of Paris to Restaurant 1728, housed in a classical 18th-century townhouse built by an architect of Louis XV.

Curious Parisians craned to catch a glimpse of the two leaders from the cafes and shops lining the avenue, as Sarkozy admirers waved and clapped from the balconies.

The president appeared relaxed and mingled freely with the crowd, shaking hands and blowing kisses. Mr. Harper came off as much more reserved.

At one point, the pair waded into a group of Canadian journalists. The prime minister seemed apologetic for unwittingly leading Mr. Sarkozy into the lion's den.

The diminutive president nevertheless shook hands enthusiastically with the journalists, leaving Mr. Harper to quip, "I'm not going to shake hands with you guys; that would be too much."

Harper can't match laid back French leader; Nicolas Sarkozy has succeeded by cultivating a populist person

In terms of bilateral relations, it was a successful day for Mr. Harper. He and Mr. Sarkozy are said to have hit it off when they first spoke on the phone last month. Mr. Harper described France as a "great friend," and Mr. Sarkozy is said to have warmly received an invitation to visit Canada.

Perhaps more important, the prime minister left Paris without taking much heat on Canada's position on climate change.

It is the second time in a week that Mr. Harper, who has struggled to increase support for his federal Conservatives, has appeared wooden next to a charismatic leader. In a visit to Ontario and British Columbia, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger enthused about climate change while poking fun at his own movie-star persona.

Meanwhile, Mr. Harper said Canada and France are "on the same page" when it comes to the war in Afghanistan. Both countries are committed to the mission, even though neither views their presence there as permanent, said the prime minister.

Mr. Sarkozy has said French troops will not be deployed in Afghanistan "forever," but has not set a withdrawal date.

Afghan anti-drug program stalled; Canadian funds to fight narcotics trade left unspent

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EDITION: National
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1
DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS
BYLINE: Steven Edwards
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 695

UNITED NATIONS – Four months after Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a substantial increase in funding for Afghan reconstruction and development — with a large portion of the new money slated for anti-drug programs — Afghanistan's cumbersome bureaucracy has managed to spend only a fraction of the windfall.

Britain, chief donor to the US\$42.3-million fund, is so alarmed it has "turned off the [money] tap" until Afghanistan's ministries show they can spend the cash, which has languished in the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund since its inception in 2005.

Critics say leaving the money to sit idle is scandalous, given that Canadian and other NATO troops are locked in a deadly struggle to make the country safe for reconstruction. Since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, 56 Canadian soldiers and a Canadian diplomat have been killed, as well as nearly 500 soldiers of the international forces.

Canadian officials are more guarded than their British colleagues when asked if Canada has interrupted the flow of taxpayer money to the fund pending improvements in the Afghan government's efficiency.

"The trust fund is relatively new and operates in a challenging environment," said a Foreign Affairs spokesperson.

"It is accordingly expected that considerable initial effort would be invested in getting the building blocks right for responsible assistance to be programmed."

The department did not answer inquiries about the exact status of the \$3-million Mr. Harper pledged for the fund in February, among \$200-million for other anti-drug, reconstruction and development programs.

As a result, it remains unknown whether Canada will follow the British example and hold back or stagger delivery of its latest pledge. The Canadian International Development Agency has been more forthcoming, confirming it has delivered \$1.2-million it agreed in March, 2006, to hand over.

The fund, one of the Afghan government's flagship reconstruction programs, aims to combat drug production in part by giving people other means to earn a living. "Our appeal to donors is to trust the trust fund," said Habibullah Qaderi, the Afghan Counter Narcotics Minister, at the fund's launch.

Since then, deposits plus pipeline pledges now total US\$74.5–million, according to figures supplied yesterday by the UN Development Program, which acts as trustee.

But while a management board that includes Afghan, UN and donor officials has approved US\$27.2–million in projects, the Afghan government has taken charge of just US\$7.2–million. As of last month, it had spent only US\$1.3–million.

"It's basically an administrative mess," said one international source with knowledge of the fund's workings.

"There is something inherently wrong with the entire program, from the complicated application process, to confusion over what projects are eligible, to the sheer impossibility of working out who's actually doing the approving and the rejecting."

While there are plenty of ideas for projects from officials and aid agencies throughout Afghanistan, applications must be made through government ministries —leading to the bottlenecks.

"The main issue is ministry capacity," said one senior Western diplomat. "The government of Afghanistan started from an extremely low base."

Approved projects include a micro–hydro system in northeastern Afghanistan that could boost incomes and create jobs by providing electricity. But that appears an isolated example.

"I have not seen any impact of the significant financial contributions to that trust fund on the ground in Helmand or Kandahar [in the south], which is where I work," said Norine MacDonald, a leading Afghanistan researcher with the Senlis Council, a think–tank that last week issued a scathing criticism of CIDA's aid record in the country.

She said poppy cultivation is up in those provinces, which are also the focus of Canadian troop deployments. "I think there are a lot of indicators that there is a lot of private dissatisfaction with how counter–narcotics policy is going in Afghanistan."

Britain says it still has faith in the fund, but cannot justify further donations at present.

"It's not about a continuous tap," said one British official. "It's rather, you turn on the tap and give a certain amount, and when the bucket's full, you turn off the tap. When the bucket is a bit emptier, you can add more."

Other donors include the European Commission, Australia, Japan, Poland and Sweden. "There are plenty of other places where this stagnant money could be used," said an Australian diplomat. But officials stressed there is no concern the money might be swallowed by corruption or misdirected.

"The general mood among donors is that they want to understand why there are bottlenecks before they add more money," another researcher said.

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM

Canada's green plan more 'ambitious' than EU's, PM says; VISIT TO PARIS; Boast only true if emissions since '90 ignored: critic

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SECTION: World
PAGE: A12
ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France, go to lunch in Paris yesterday. ;
DATELINE: PARIS
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 603

PARIS – Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister, has raised eyebrows by saying Canada's shortterm targets for cutting greenhouse–gas emissions are more ambitious than those imposed by the European Union, widely considered the leader in the developed world at tackling climate change.

As the Group of Eight summit approaches, he has been selling Canada's green plan hard and his diplomatic overtures have so far been politely received.

On Monday, he told German business leaders Canada's plan could be used as a model for other growing or developing countries. Yesterday, he took his pitch one step farther on a visit to Paris for his first meeting with Nicolas Sarkozy, the new French President.

"Canada has an ambitious plan for reducing greenhousegas emissions. In fact, over the next 13 years, our targets are more ambitious than those of the European Union," Mr. Harper said at a news conference with Francois Fillon, the French Prime Minister.

But at least one environmentalist says Mr. Harper's statement is only true if Canada discounts a sharp rise in the country's emissions since 1990.

Matthew Bramley, director of climate change at the Pembina Institute, called his remark "misleading and, frankly, irresponsible."

"It is no doubt difficult for the present government to accept responsibility for the consequences of the inaction of its predecessors, but there is a broader national responsibility that must be shouldered here," he said in an e–mail.

In March, the European Union agreed to reduce greenhouse–gas emissions to 20% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Canada has also pledged to cut emissions by 20% by 2020, but uses a base year of 2006, rather than the 1990 baseline mandated by the Kyoto protocol, which Canada and 172 other countries have ratified.

Canada's green plan more 'ambitious' than EU's, PM says; VISIT TO PARIS; Boast only true if emissions since

Mr. Harper said this week Canada could not meet its obligations without crippling the economy.

Canada's targets could indeed produce a greater reduction in emissions over the next 13 years than in Europe if one uses a more current base year, said Mr. Bramley. In doing so, Canada would effectively be shirking its poor record since 1990.

Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, said this week she was "not happy" Canada had walked away from the Kyoto accord.

She has been pushing for G8 leaders to sign a climate-change declaration that sets a tough global target for cutting emissions by mid-century, but the United States has resisted specific targets and timelines.

Canada has agreed to Ms. Merkel's long-term target, but at an EU-Canada summit on Monday, the EU noted developed countries should be expected to do more than Canada is doing to reach that goal.

If French leaders were disappointed in Canada's performance, they weren't showing it yesterday.

France has threatened to slap an import tax on countries that do not obey the Kyoto protocol.

Mr. Sarkozy, who was elected last month on a platform of reforming France's welfare state, has called climate change his "first battle."

But Mr. Fillon said yesterday the penalty is not "primarily aimed" at Canada, but rather countries that put European industries subject to emissions cap at a disadvantage.

"Free competition cannot mean different rules in different jurisdictions. We can't ask European industries to produce under constraints that other countries won't impose. Again, Canada is not the most pertinent country in this regard," he said.

Mr. Harper was also asked to comment on the increasing belligerence of Vladimir Putin, the Russian President, who said this week that Russia would target Europe with missiles if the United States proceeds with a plan to build a missile-defence system based in Eastern Europe.

"We are convinced that the intentions of NATO are altogether clear," Mr. Harper said, echoing the views of George W. Bush, the U.S. President.

There's no reason to interpret these actions as a threat to Russia."

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister said Canada and France are "on the same page" when it comes to the war in Afghanistan. Both countries are committed to the mission, even though neither views its presence there as permanent.

Mr. Sarkozy has said French troops will not be deployed in Afghanistan "forever," but has not set a withdrawal date.

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For more news and analysis of Harper's trip to Europe, visit nationalpost.com

KEYWORDS: FOREIGN RELATIONS; TRADE DISPUTES; NAFTA; TARIFFS;
TRADEAGREEMENTS; CANADA

Canada's green plan more 'ambitious' than EU's, PM says; VISIT TO PARIS; Boast only true if emissions si

PM takes his pitch one step farther

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PAGE: A1 / FRONT
KEYWORDS: FOREIGN RELATIONS; TRADE DISPUTES; NAFTA; CANADA
DATELINE: PARIS
BYLINE: ANDREW MAYEDA
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 654

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has raised eyebrows by saying here that Canada's short-term targets for cutting greenhouse-gas emissions are more ambitious than those imposed by the European Union, considered the leader in the developed world at tackling climate change.

As the G8 summit approaches, Harper has been selling his green plan hard this week, and his diplomatic overtures have been politely received in Europe.

On Monday, he told German business leaders that Canada's plan could be used as a model for other countries, but he took his pitch one step farther on a visit to Paris yesterday for his first meeting with French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

"Canada has an ambitious plan for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. In fact, over the next 13 years, our targets are more ambitious than those of the European Union," Harper said at a news conference with French Prime Minister Francois Fillon.

But at least one environmentalist says the prime minister's statement is true only if Canada discounts a sharp rise in the country's emissions since 1990.

Matthew Bramley, director of climate change at Alberta's Pembina Institute, an environmental think tank, called Harper's remark "misleading and, frankly, irresponsible."

"It is no doubt difficult for the present government to accept responsibility for the consequences of the inaction of its predecessors, but there is a broader national responsibility that must be shouldered here," Bramley said in an email.

In March, the European Union agreed to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions to 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020.

Canada has also pledged to cut emissions by 20 per cent by 2020, but it uses a base year of 2006, rather than the 1990 baseline mandated by the Kyoto Protocol, which Canada and 172 other countries have ratified.

Harper said this week Canada could not meet its obligations without crippling the economy, because the federal government had spent too many years merely "walking the walk."

Canada's targets could indeed produce a greater reduction in emissions over the next 13 years than in Europe if one uses a more current base year, Bramley said. In doing so, Canada would effectively be shirking its poor record since 1990, he added.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said this week she was "not happy" that Canada had walked away from Kyoto.

Merkel has been pushing for G8 leaders to sign a climate-change declaration that sets a tough global target for cutting emissions by mid-century, but the United States has resisted specific targets and timelines.

Canada has agreed to Merkel's long-term target, but at an EU-Canada summit on Monday, the EU noted developed countries should be expected to do more than Canada to reach that goal.

If French leaders were disappointed in Canada's performance, they weren't showing it yesterday. France has threatened to slap an import tax on countries that do not obey the Kyoto Protocol, designed to fight global warming. Sarkozy, who was elected last month on a platform of reforming France's welfare state, has called climate change his "first battle."

But Fillon said yesterday the penalty is not "primarily aimed" at Canada, but rather at countries that put European industries subject to an emissions cap at a disadvantage.

"Free competition cannot mean different rules in different jurisdictions. We can't ask European industries to produce under constraints that other countries won't impose. Again, Canada is not the most pertinent country in this regard," Fillon said.

Harper was also asked to comment on the increasing belligerence of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said this week that Russia would target Europe with missiles if the United States proceeds with a plan to build a missile-defence system based in eastern Europe. The United States has said the system is designed to shoot down missiles from Iran and represents no threat to Russia.

Harper echoed that view: "We are convinced that the intentions of NATO are altogether clear. There's no reason to interpret these actions as a threat to Russia."

Meanwhile, Harper said Canada and France are "on the same page" when it comes to the war in Afghanistan. Both countries are committed to the mission, even though neither views their presence there as permanent, he said.

Sarkozy has said French troops will not be deployed in Afghanistan "forever," but he has not set a withdrawal date.

Ottawa Citizen

War has changed – except for the dying and mourning

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COLUMN: Mike Boone
KEYWORDS: DIVIDENDS; MONARCHY
BYLINE: MIKE BOONE
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 562

The sunset ceremony will be on the northeast side of Mount Royal cemetery, which will render the commemoration of

D–Day inaudible on Crescent St.

At 6 this evening, the Black Watch band will perform at the cemetery to honour casualties of the Normandy invasion in 1944. Skirling bagpipes won't drown out the clink of ice cubes among Grand Prix revellers downtown, but passers–by on Cote des Neiges Rd. may pause to remember that June 6 has significance beyond its proximity to Race Day.

Lt.–Col. Bruce Bolton, commanding officer of Canada's oldest Highland regiment from 2003 to '05 and chairman of the Black Watch heritage and history committee, says the pipe band is consistently in high demand. Bolton, who will be 57 this autumn, was 10 when his father, a Black Watch veteran, decided he ought to begin bagpipe lessons.

Bolton didn't serenade me during my visit to the 100–year–old armoury on Bleury St. He talked history as we sat in the officers' mess, under the beatific gaze of the Queen Mother, the regiment's colonel–in–chief for 65 years until her death in 2002. (She's been succeeded by her grandson, the prince of Wales.)

The Black Watch wasn't in action on D–Day. The regiment relieved front–line troops a month after the amphibious invasion. The Black Watch, Bolton said, suffered "huge casualties" as it fought its way through France, Belgium and Holland.

Bolton has talked to the people at Mount Royal cemetery about organizing a military tour of the grounds, where 2,500 officers' and soldiers' graves include that of Sir Arthur Currie, who commanded Canadian forces in the First World War.

"Montreal's history is up there," he said. "And there's a military side of that history that is so important to remember."

Bolton believes the military mission in Afghanistan and "the images of coffins coming off airplanes" make Canadians more acutely aware of history and of armed conflict as a means of resolving disputes.

"Coffins weren't on television in World War II," he said. "There are cemeteries all over Europe."

Recalling Cpl. Jason Warren, a Black Watch soldier killed in Afghanistan last summer, Bolton said he was "not taking away at all from those who are giving up their lives, but in World War II hundreds died every day."

From the formation of the Black Watch in 1862 through the funeral of Jason Warren at the regimental Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul last August, every casualty represents valour in defence of country.

"It's intriguing for young people to try to understand what happened," Bolton said.

More so because movies like Saving Private Ryan glorify American heroism. And the current mission is perceived by some as Canadian blood being shed in the service of U.S. foreign policy.

Tom Hanks defeated Naziism and Don Cherry has dropped the gloves with terrorism. A few hours after listening to Bolton describe the glory of the Black Watch, I watched the bizarre spectacle of Cherry – accompanied by Lt.-Gen. Rick Hillier, Canada's chief of defence staff – making his spotlight grand entrance at Scotiabank Place for Game 3 of the Stanley Cup final. It was our homegrown version of the heretofore uniquely U.S. conflation of sports and militarism: the Don & Rick Show, rockin' and sockin' the Taliban. Leni Riefenstahl meets Monty Python.

The nation's top soldier consorting with our xenophobic, unlettered national buffoon: What would Sir Arthur Currie think?

War has changed. Canadians who fought their way into Germany didn't have to deal with improvised explosive devices or an enemy unencumbered by the niceties of the Geneva Convention.

What hasn't changed is the mournful sound of pipes and drums, echoing off gravestones.

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Afghan anti-drug fund languishes; \$42.3 million sitting in accounts. Supposed to be given to farmers to keep them from growing poppies

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DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS

BYLINE: STEVEN EDWARDS

SOURCE: CanWest News Service; The New York Times and AFP contributed to this report

WORD COUNT: 342

Back in February, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced to great fanfare his government would substantially increase its funding for Afghan reconstruction and development. A big portion of that new money, Harper said, was earmarked for anti-drug programs, including a fund to be spent by the Afghan government.

It now emerges the Afghan bureaucracy is so cumbersome that almost \$42.3 million U.S. that Canada and other donors have given to the so-called Counter Narcotics Trust Fund since its 2005 launch is languishing in bank accounts, unused.

Britain, the chief donor to the fund, is so alarmed it has "turned off the tap."

Critics say the idle fund is particularly scandalous given Canadian and other NATO troops are locked in a daily struggle to make the country safe for reconstruction.

"The Trust Fund is relatively new and operates in a challenging environment," said a Foreign Affairs spokesperson, while acknowledging the fund is not working properly. The department did not respond to questions on the exact status of

\$3 million Harper pledged in February out of \$200 million for other anti-drug, reconstruction and development programs.

The Canadian International Development Agency confirmed it has delivered \$1.2 million to the fund, which is one of Kabul's flagship reconstruction programs to combat drug production partly by giving Afghans other means to earn a living.

Norine MacDonald, a leading Afghanistan researcher with the Senlis Council, a think tank that has been scathingly critical of CIDA's aid record in the country, said poppy cultivation is up in those provinces.

The Afghan Defence Ministry said yesterday a boat full of fleeing Taliban fighters had been fired upon by NATO helicopters and sunk in the Helmand River, in southern Afghanistan. All

on board, between 20 and 30 guerrillas, drowned, said General Zaher Azimi, a ministry spokesperson.

Afghan anti-drug fund languishes; \$42.3 million sitting in accounts. Supposed to be given to farmers to keep

It was the second sinking on the river reported in recent days. Another boat, carrying about 60 people, sank Saturday in the same area, although there were conflicting reports as to whether those aboard had been civilians or Taliban fighters.

Also yesterday, the French Defence Ministry said it wants to shift its priorities in Afghanistan from military operations to training Afghan security forces and helping the country's development.

A NATO soldier serving in eastern Afghanistan was killed yesterday, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said, giving no further details.

Bring Omar Khadr home to Canada

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TERRORISM;CITIZENSHIP; CANADA
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 522

What should be done with Omar Khadr? Twenty years old, Khadr has been held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba since 2002 for a crime he is alleged to have committed when he was 15, an age at which under international law he is considered to have been a child soldier.

On Monday, two U.S. military commissions in separate decisions dismissed charges against Khadr and a second prisoner held at Guantanamo Bay, on the ground the process the Bush administration set up does not comply with the new U.S. Military Commissions Act, passed by Congress last fall to correct the failings of a previous law.

In Khadr's case, the U.S. judge invoked prosecutors' failure to show the Canadian is an "unlawful" enemy combatant. It is not illegal to be an enemy combatant, the current designation for Khadr and for about 380 other prisoners in Guantanamo Bay who are alleged to have links to Al-Qa'ida or Afghanistan's Taliban.

Even before Monday's trial, the U.S. said it was unlikely it would release Khadr, or any other detainee. Waiting while the U.S. sorts out its military-tribunal rules could prove time-consuming. The appeal process, to which prosecutors vowed on Monday to apply, does not yet exist.

The United States has had five years to set up a judicial process that would meet minimal tests of common sense, not to say international standards. Its failure to find a solution is lamentable. The one positive sign is that U.S. courts, including the much-maligned military tribunals, have twice rejected processes as unconstitutional or illegal.

So, the question remains what should be done with Omar Khadr, one of four sons of a notorious Al-Qa'ida fighter, Ahmed Said Khadr, who was killed in a battle with the Pakistan army in 2003.

The best option would be to send him home to Canada. The case against him is unlikely to lead to legal sanctions anywhere outside Guantanamo Bay. Khadr was 15 when he allegedly threw a hand grenade that killed a U.S. Special Forces medic serving in Afghanistan in 2002. He was shot three times in the incident by U.S. soldiers.

His age at the time of the alleged crime puts him in the same company as the thousands of child soldiers who in recent years have been dragged into wars by fathers, brothers or marauding armies, to be brainwashed or coerced into committing crimes, in civil conflicts in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, to take two notable examples. Yet he is the only youngster ever known to be accused of such a crime.

As a Canadian citizen, he has human rights that his country has failed to defend adequately. He has yet to be

tried in a recognized court of law, a gap Canada could fill. We could use a security certificate to keep tabs on the young man once he is transferred from Guantanamo Bay.

A second, less attractive option would to request that the United States send him to the site of the alleged crime, Afghanistan. But Afghanistan's reputation for justice is not on a par with ours. On balance, the best place for him is here, whatever Canadians might feel about his family and their views.

Canada is putting its relations with U.S. ahead of human rights; Our government should speak up to defend fundamental rights of citizens

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KEYWORDS: INQUIRIES; DEPORTATION; CANADA
BYLINE: MAUDE BARLOW, ALEX NEVE and ROCH TASSE
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 832

While charges against Omar Khadr were dropped on a technicality, he continues to face indefinite imprisonment as an "enemy combatant" under the U.S. Military Commissions Act.

Omar Khadr is the only child in modern history to be charged with war crimes, and yet, unlike Britain and Australia, which have successfully negotiated the release of their citizens from Guantanamo Bay, Canada continues to ignore his plight.

A U.S. State Department official declared last week that Khadr might be detained until the end of the "war on terror," regardless of yesterday's ruling.

Canada's public silence in the face of such blatant human rights abuse experienced by a Canadian citizen is incomprehensible. Is it just unwillingness to go to bat for someone with a controversial family background? Or are we learning that even basic human and legal rights can be traded away for some coveted best-friend status with the United States, something neither Britain nor Australia has been afraid to forgo in the name of justice?

Khadr is a Canadian citizen who has spent the last five years in prison at Guantanamo Bay, accused of having been responsible for the death of a U.S. soldier during fighting in Afghanistan. He was apprehended by U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15, and was only first brought before a U.S. military commission in early 2006.

The Military Commissions Act authorizes military tribunals that strip detainees of their normal constitutional rights. The U.S. Supreme Court has denied Khadr, and more than 300 other Guantanamo inmates, the right immediately to pursue habeas corpus, the right to challenge the legality of their incarceration. The court ruled instead they must exhaust other lengthy proceedings before turning to the courts for this centuries-old fundamental relief.

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Khadr's appeal challenging the constitutionality of the Pentagon's war-crimes tribunal in Guantanamo Bay.

Despite the controversy surrounding Khadr and his family, who are well-known for terrorist connections and anti-Western rhetoric, there is no justification for the Canadian government's failure to demand forcefully and publicly, as other U.S. allies have, that his human rights, including the right to a fair trial, be fully protected.

Canada is putting its relations with U.S. ahead of human rights; Our government should speak up to defend

Our government's failure to make this public request, and its failure to demand that Guantanamo Bay be shut down immediately, sends a very worrying message to the rest of world about where Canada stands on human rights and international law. And it speaks volumes about the Canadian government's tendency over these past five years to fail to put human rights at the centre of its relationship with the United States.

The British government, which is the Bush administration's staunchest ally in Iraq, has, in speaking out against Guantanamo Bay, stated "the continuing detention without fair trial of prisoners is unacceptable in terms of human rights. But it is also ineffective in terms of counter-terrorism." Britain has refused to have its citizens tried at Guantanamo and has negotiated to have them transferred out of the naval base. Similarly, France and Germany have also demanded that their citizens be released from Guantanamo.

Even Australian Prime Minister John Howard, bowing to public pressure, protested the detention of David Hicks, an Australian citizen who spent five years in Guantanamo. Hicks is now serving the rest of his term in an Australian jail.

The Canadian government now stands apart in allowing one of its citizens to be tried in the type of kangaroo court that democratic countries, including Canada, have regularly and vehemently denounced elsewhere in the world.

Signed into law by President George W. Bush in October 2006, the Military Commissions Act gives U.S. authorities the power to detain indefinitely foreign terrorism suspects, including Canadians, without pressing charges. These suspects do not enjoy the same constitutional rights as U.S. citizens, and evidence obtained through torture and ill treatment, including at the hands of U.S. officials at Guantanamo Bay or other U.S.-run secret prisons around the world, might be admissible.

Canadians might assume in the wake of the Maher Arar case, our government would be much more responsive to concerns about the rights of Canadian citizens being flouted so cavalierly by U.S. officials. Sadly, the Khadr case suggests that is far from the case.

By not insisting Omar Khadr be treated in accordance with the full range of his basic human rights, the Canadian government is indicating it is willing to trade away rights for the sake of making friends in Washington.

It is time for Canada to speak out about Guantanamo Bay, and advocate more forcefully on behalf of Omar Khadr. If there is one file where the U.S. government needs to be pressed by Canada to restore the protection of fundamental human rights, this is it. The silence must come to an end.

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